

PIN MONEY:

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHORESS OF
"THE MANNERS OF THE DAY."

"Here's something to buy pins ;—marriage is chargeable."
VENICE PRESERVED.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,
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C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.

PREFACE.

IT has become so much the custom to connect every character introduced into a work of fiction with some living original, that the writer of *PIN MONEY* feels it necessary to declare its incidents and personages to be wholly imaginary. Exhibiting an attempt to transfer the familiar narrative of Miss Austin to a higher sphere of society, it is, in fact, a Novel of the simplest kind, addressed by a woman to readers of her own sex;—by whom, as well as by the professional critics, its predecessor, “*THE MANNERS OF THE DAY*,” was received with too much indulgence not to encourage a further appeal to their favour



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CHAPTER I.

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GOLDSMITH.

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and the Irish solicitors will manage to keep the matter drawling on for eight or ten weeks; and I shall not get off to Calsbad before the end of August, unless my niece can make up her mind without further difficulty."

"You are always in such a hurry, Olivia! Sir Brooke only made his proposal last night, while we were waiting for the carriage to draw up at Almack's; and as I had no notion of what was going on, I kept begging Frederica to tie her boa closer, and keep her mouth shut, for fear of the east wind;—so that a definitive answer was out of the question."

"Well! and as soon as she reached home and informed you of what had passed, you wrote to Sir Brooke for an explanation of his intentions;—eh! my dear!"

"No, indeed; I am not so fond of business and explanations as you are."

"But you desired Frederica to take up her pen and ——"

"On the contrary, I begged she would take some arrāroot and go to bed; for I assure you the wind was frightfully keen as we crossed the

pavement in King-street. Since the new opening into St. James's-street, there have been more colds caught at Almack's than I can bear to think of. Well,—please God! I hope she will be happy. Frederica is a very amiable creature,—an excellent disposition,—only I never can prevail upon her to take proper care of herself.”

“And Sir Brooke Rawleigh has a very pretty little estate in Warwickshire, of which I understand he takes *very* good care. It is just the sort of property a man likes to come into;—he succeeds two old bachelor uncles, who never allowed an axe or a surveyor to come within reach of the premises. Old Sir Brooke considered the family timber as inviolable as the family diamonds.”

“The young man is very well spoken of. His aunt, Mrs. Martha Derenzy, was saying the other day that there is not a finer young man in town;—so steady, and so unlike the idle dashers of the day! He will spend a quiet evening playing dummy whist with her, and then go home with his umbrella in the rain,

with as much good-nature as if he had been doing the thing he liked best in the world."

"Umph!—rather creepmousy for a young man of eight-and-twenty; I would sooner hear of him in the House, or making himself useful in his county. However, Frederica is not without spirit; and I trust she will inspire him with a little more energy, or I shall disown her as my godchild. But now, my dear, about settlements. I conclude your errand with me is to consult about your terms with Sir Brooke?"

"Terms?—surely I told you before, that Frederica acknowledges having always felt a preference for Rawleigh over the rest of her admirers; and that I entertain no doubt she will accept him at once."

"Yes—yes! I understand!—She will ask 'time to become better acquainted with him;'—eat half-a-dozen dinners in his company;—spoil a row or two of netting while he sits whispering nonsense and pulling her workbox to pieces;—and finally vouchsafe to give that consent at the end of a fortnight, which she might

bestow with quite as good a grace this very day. All those young-lady etiquettes are perfectly understood. But what do you mean to ask for her?"

"*Ask for her?*" said the mystified Lady Launceston.

"Yes!—what does your man of business think you have a right to expect?"

"Thank heaven, I *have* no man of business; for yours, my dear sister, appears the plague of your life."

"Well then—yourself; what provision shall you require for your daughter?"

"Why you say Sir Brooke has a very pretty estate; so Frederica will be tolerably well off."

"But I am speaking of her jointure—her pin money."

"Oh! I suppose Sir Brooke's lawyers will settle all that, while the carriage is building and the wedding clothes in hand."

"*Sir Brooke's lawyers!*" cried Lady Olivia, raising her eyes and hands in contemptuous compassion of her sister's ignorance of the world;—or at least of such of its legal and

financial departments as formed the delight of her own existence. "My dear Sophia! upon an occasion like this, you really *must* exert yourself. Recollect you are the sole guardian of your daughter's interests. She has ten thousand pounds, which may prove extremely convenient to pay off mortgages, besides very fair expectations; and altogether you have a right to look for liberal overtures."

"Well, I *will* look for them, since you insist upon it," said Lady Launceston, gathering up her shawl for departure, and smiling at the solemn earnestness of her sister. "You know I have no head for business. Launceston always used to settle every thing of that kind; and the utmost extent of my domestic management is limited to stretching my jointure so as just to cover our expenses; which, thank God, I have always been enabled to do."

"That is exactly the point to which I wished to bring you. What would you have done with your expenses, if *your* father and mother had thought and talked with as much levity on the subject of settlements as you do?"

“Oh ! I suppose Lord Launceston made the necessary arrangements for me. I recollect we all signed something on a sheet of parchment the day before my marriage ; but Gray was waiting in the other room with my jewel-box, which occupied my attention far more agreeably. Then, when I lost my poor husband, I was in too much affliction to inquire about settlements ; —my son was very considerate in letting me know that I was to have two thousand a-year, and Frederica ten thousand pounds—an arrangement which, I conclude, was made in the will. Poor dear Launceston could not endure to see a woman worldly-wise ; he never suffered me to talk to him about his pecuniary concerns ; and used to say that a managing woman deserved to wear a beard by way of penance.”

“Ay !—I have not forgotten his polite animadversions upon my chancery-suit with my father’s executors ; I know he hated to see me under his roof, because he saw I was not a person to be hoodwinked like some of my family. But even Lord Launceston, with all his arbitrary notions of female delicacy and

feminine nonentity, would not have wished to see his daughter defrauded of her just pretensions."

"I tell you what we will do," said Lady L., penetrated with a bright thought of escaping all the vexatious arithmetical combinations she saw impending over her. "Come back with me to Charles-street, and talk the matter over with Frederica;—you have a much better head for this sort of thing than I have. Do now—there's a good creature! It was sprinkling when I came in; but the pavement must be dry by this time, and with your clogs and a good warm shawl—or shall I send back the chair for you?"

"With the thermometer at 68°, I have very little apprehension of catching cold! But I expect a man with silks from Harding's at one;—at half-past, Mawe's people are coming to clean my alabaster vases;—at two, Ridgway's clerk will be here to see how many of the pamphlets I keep;—and from that time till three, I have appointments with my Worcestershire agent,—Professor Muddlewell, about the mining

business in Flintshire,—General Popplestone, to whom I wish to refer for Frederick's commission,—Lady Ulster, about getting young Shakes into the Academy of Music;—besides two notes, which I must positively answer, relative to a negotiation for an introduction between Lady Barbara Dynley and the Duke of D——;—she is expiring to get to his parties."

"And *you*, I should imagine, my-dear Olivia, of your labours!—Goodness! how *will* you get through all these perplexities?"

"You shall judge if you please; for at four I have ordered the carriage to go to Knight's, at Chelsea, with a beautiful new annual I have just received from my nephew Tadcaster, whom I fitted out last year for Swan River."

"I thought Knight, the bookseller, lived in Pall Mall?"

"And at five," resumed Lady Olivia, who seldom troubled herself to enlighten the crepuscular mind of her sister, "I will look in at Charles-street, and hear what arrangements have been talked of between Sir Brooke and Frederica."

At five, accordingly, Lady Olivia Tadcaster drove to the door; and during the ten minutes devoted on the hall-steps by this notable economist of time and space, to directing her footman by what short cuts and obliquities he must contrive to deliver seven cards, two notes, a parcel and a message, to turn to account the lapse of her family consultation,—Miss Rawdon was explaining to her lover the necessity for admitting and conciliating this fussiest of aunts; who would otherwise beset their union with a thousand well-meant impediments. She concluded her preliminary counsels in time to receive Lady Olivia and her congratulations, with just the flushed, fluttering, hysterical tremour of perfect felicity, with which young ladies listen to the assurance that they are angels; and contemplate, for the first time, the career of human happiness and worldly prosperity arising from matronly importance.

In truth, poor Frederica's prospects, although irradiated at the age of twenty-one by the auspicious sunshine of "measureless content," had not been without their clouds and passing

showers. It was now nearly a year since a visit to the county of Warwick introduced Sir Brooke Rawleigh to her notice, as the most charming of mankind; for a man is naturally twice as highly valued in his own county as in any other, or in London. He had passed a gay Christmas with her at her brother's seat at Marston Park;—had taken a daily ride with her—read with her—talked to her—smiled upon her—sighed for her,—done every thing, in short, but tender himself and Rawleighford to her acceptance. After his departure, her brother incessantly rallied her upon his attachment; while her female cousins expressed their indignation at his desertion, in terms which frequently brought tears into Frederica's hazel eyes;—for, alas! it was known that Sir Brooke had quitted Marston only to venture upon a visit to a certain Lady Mapleberry—an active-spirited woman of her aunt Tadcaster's class, with six unmarried daughters;—one of those large, lively, goodhumoured, singing, dancing, riding, chatting families, where a young man seeking a wife is apt to fall in love with the joint-stock

merit and animation of the group ; and to feel quite astonished on discovering, after his union with Harriet or Jane, how moderate a proportion he has received in his lawful sixth of the music, information, accomplishments, and good-humoured gossipry of the united tribe. Much to the astonishment, however, of the Jane, Harriet, Eliza, Margaret, Laura, and Anna, in question, Sir Brooke Rawleigh quitted Mapleberry quite as free in hand, and far more free in fancy, than he had found himself when his britschka glided through the lodge gates of Marston Park.

From the meeting of parliament in the ensuing spring, till the auspicious second Wednesday of the month of June,—poor Miss Rawdon was destined to undergo all the little fretful irritations of love and suspense. She had been invited to Devonshire House on the alternate Thursdays, with those which extended his Grace's hospitality to Sir Brooke ; and had been omitted altogether from Lady Mapleberry's never-ending still-beginning bread-and-butter dances. Sir Brooke, in defiance of her daily rides with her brother in Hyde-park, had

mounted a new phaëton, and was never to be seen without the reins in his hand; and had appropriated to himself a stall at the Opera, from which, by no process of vertebral dislocation, could he catch a glimpse of Lady Launceston's box.—Nay! for two succeeding Almack's he had danced two succeeding quadrilles and galoppes with Laura Mapleberry; and consequently, for two succeeding Thursdays Miss Rawdon had been destined to the martyrdom of a nervous headache; and Lady Launceston and the apothecary to the gratifying excitement of an indefinite and highly-promising indisposition. But at length Frederica, after taking torrents of camphor-julep, took courage! Instead of following her irresolute admirer in his flirtations with burning eyes and a beating heart, she began to turn the former with some show of graciousness upon her brother's friend, Colonel Rhyse, of the Guards; and subdued the perturbation of the latter, till she could manufacture a smile for Sir Robert Morse and young Lord Putney, two of her frequent partners.

The charm was eminently successful. Sir Brooke grew agitated in his turn;—for a whole evening Laura Mapleberry sat unnoticed;—and by the end of a week, Frederica's headaches were convalescent,—for her hand was pledged to the man of her heart. Although an amiable, engaging, accomplished girl, Miss Rawdon had no preternatural pretensions to perfection. She was but a woman; and when she found herself warmly solicited by Sir Brooke for a promise that in accepting his proposals she would attempt at some future time to return his affection, did not think it necessary to magnify his triumph and depreciate herself and her sex, by a confession of having forestalled it by her own preference. Not a single word did she communicate touching her nervous indisposition and the camphor-julep!

They were just pausing at this degree of tender confidence, and Lady Launceston was smiling her maternal satisfaction upon them both, with no greater motive of inquietude for either than their position between the draughts

of a closed window and a listed door, when Lady Olivia Tadcaster flustered her way into the drawing-room, with her lustring pelisse rustling at every step like a plantation of aspens. She soon despatched her satisfaction in “welcoming into her family the nephew of her estimable friends the late Sir Brooke and Sir Robert Rawleigh;” glanced at “a valuable stratum of blue clay she had discovered on occasion of a visit to Rawleighford twenty years before,—and which, as she could not prevail upon her host to regard it with sufficient attention, she would have willingly farmed upon her own account, more especially as there had been a talk at that time of carrying the Wardingsley canal within a stone’s throw of the estate;”—grumbled over an extra turnpike she had discovered at Earl’s-court in her morning’s drive;—explained the mode of cultivation to be bestowed upon some New Zealand spinach she had purchased at Knight’s, of which a plant would cover three quarters of an acre,—and of which Sir Brooke very judiciously begged an ounce, in order that

he might reassure the horticultural misgivings of his future aunt, by making the experiment at Rawleighford ;—and finally anchored herself upon the history of an arabesque handle, which Mawe's people had broken from her Aldobrandini vase, in their cleansifications. When she had proceeded as far in this episode as her purchase of the alabaster vessel at Florence, and its embarkation on board an English trading-vessel at Leghorn, Sir Brooke uttered a profound sigh, made a profound bow, muttered something about "business" in Lincoln's Inn, and took refuge in his phaeton ; while Frederica bestowed a glance as nearly resembling an angry look as she was capable of assuming, on the aunt, who not only detained her from the furtive delight of peeping behind the damask draperies at Rawleigh's noble charioteership, but actually followed up his exit with an exclamation of—

"Well ! I am glad he is gone at last ;—now we can be a little comfortable !—Frederica, my dear child, I have a thousand things to say to you."

“ Pray do not say them just now, if they require a thousand answers ; for I have at least a thousand other things to think of.”

“ As you please,” replied Lady Olivia, looking very much affronted ; more particularly as she remembered her footman’s multitudinous errands, and that—even making allowance for the short cuts—she could not possibly command the use of her carriage for the next half hour. “ I trust I am not in the habit of intruding my advice ; but I came here by my sister’s desire to talk with you.”

“ My dearest aunt !—did you but know how much I have been talked to for the last three hours !”

“ I conclude so, my dear !—I conclude so !” cried Lady Olivia, unable to preserve her ill-humour, when the prospect of a little business to be managed presented itself to her hopes. “ And now tell me all about it. *Has* Sir Brooke behaved handsomely ?—What does he offer ?”

“ His hand and heart,—or you would not see me so happy !” replied Miss Rawdon, rising

and seating herself nearer to her mother, as she thought that she must shortly leave her glanced across her mind, and produced a momentary emotion.

“My dear Fred.!” said Lady Launceston, “do not hang over that Gardenia; you will get another of your nervous headaches.”

Frederica obeyed with a smile; for she began to suspect that her disorder was radically cured; or that perhaps it might have found its way to Laura Mapleberry.

“And your settlements, child?” inquired Lady Olivia, despising them both with an air of stern disdain worthy of Catherine of Russia.

“Sir Brooke appears to dislike business as much as I do,” said Lady Launceston, rolling the long silky ear of her lapdog round her knitting-pin. “He said he begged to offer me *carte blanche*; which I suppose means that the lawyers will settle it amongst themselves.”

“Did he—did Rawleigh offer you *carte blanche*?” exclaimed Lady Olivia, jerking together the clasp of her bag, in which she was searching for a memorandum or an old letter,

which might prove more amusing than the yeayay conversation of her sister and niece. "Well, my dear Sophia,—under such circumstances, you must decide every thing without delay. With Fred.'s ten thousand pounds, I should certainly demand three thousand a-year jointure, and five hundred pin money."

"Ask for a jointure!—make a bargain with the prospect of Rawleigh's death!" exclaimed Miss Rawdon with indignation.

"Pray, my dear niece, do not affect to be so much more delicate and fastidious than the rest of the world; all women who marry in a respectable way, have a respectable jointure and pin money settled upon them; or they might perhaps at some future time become a burden to their own relations."

"No! not *all* women," said Lady Launceston, still busy with Chloe's ear—while her daughter had again recourse to the Gardenia to conceal a smile. "I, for one, never had any pin money. Launceston was very liberal, and chose that we should have a common purse."

“ It must have been a very *uncommon* one, if it did not give you occasion to repent the bargain. A man who sets out by telling his wife, ‘as long as I have a shilling, sixpence of it is yours,’ generally takes care never to have *more* than a shilling at his disposal. I have always observed that money paid in small sums appears a tremendous concession, compared with a specific allowance, paid quarterly by the banker or the steward.”

“ Which places one exactly on a level with the butler or the dairymaid ! ”

“ No ! Frederica ; which places you on a level with women of your own rank in society. Do you suppose the Duchess of Middlesex, or Lady Rosebank, or any other person of fashion of your acquaintance, condescends to go blushing to her husband for a twenty pound note, if she wishes to perform some charitable action—or subscribe to some laudable institution—or pay Melnotte’s bill ? ”

“ But I trust Rawleigh and myself will perform our charities together ; and I am not fond

of seeing female names figuring in the lists of institutions. I shall leave that portion of our expenses to Sir Brooke."

"And Melnotte's account?—Shall you go barefoot in the punctiliousness of your delicacy; or—"

"No!—" said Frederica, musingly. "I certainly should *not* like to trouble him with my personal expenses. It is unwise on the part of any woman to allow her husband to discover of what shreds and patches her sex is composed."

"Very true, my love!" observed Lady Launceston; "for when they do trouble themselves with such matters, they so strangely exaggerate all one's little follies and their own generosity! I recollect Launceston gave me a five hundred pound note when your brother was born; and for two whole years afterwards, whenever I presented him with a bill, or put my hand into his escrutoire, he used to exclaim, 'What, Sophy?—all that five hundred gone so soon!' though after all, it was only a year's allowance."

"Well then, dear mamma," said Frederica,

“make what arrangements for me you think best; only pray do not let Rawleigh suppose *I* have any mercenary views in my marriage. Ask merely what is necessary for me. You have hitherto been so kind as to give me all I could desire, without suffering me to trouble myself with money or its value; and I was in hopes it might have been so still;—but I cannot expect any one else to be so considerate of me as my own dear mother.”

Lady Launceston threw her arms round the neck of her child; while Lady Olivia placed herself at the table, and in five minutes left upon the Russia blotting-book half a sheet of hieroglyphics, and an address to Messrs. Marwill and Makewill, New-square, Lincoln’s Inn.

“There, Sophy,” said she to her sister, with a glance of pity at the filial embrace, which she styled poor Frederica’s heroics,—“I have already given you my advice,—I now give you my solicitor’s direction. In pity to my journey to Carlsbad, see him as quickly as you can; and do not give your daughter cause to re-

proach you hereafter with your inactivity in her behalf."

And so deeply did her ladyship's counsels sink into the minds of her sister and niece, that within six weeks, as rigid an act of marriage settlement was signed in the drawing-room in Charles-street, as if Sir Brooke and Lady Rawleigh were about to marry chiefly in contemplation of a divorce; and to swear an eternal unity of mind, body, and estate, chiefly for the maintenance of separate interests and opposing rights.

CHAPTER II.

No, I'll resign them, sweet! and anchor *here*—
Here in the holy quietude of home!—
The world is all contentions—jealousies—
Strifes urged by interest and foul enmity;
While on the waves of this calm lonely stream,
The halcyon broods unscared.—I'll anchor here!

TOBIN.

SIR BROOKE RAWLEIGH, the willing victim of Lady Olivia Tadcaster's cupidity, was in truth a very pleasing, well-looking, gentlemanly young man, calculated to pass through life with credit to himself, without splitting the trumpet of fame by the magnitude of his sayings or doings. • But all that was wanting in brilliancy of talent was made up by sterling principles of honour and honesty; and his abilities were peculiarly adapted

to the judicious management of a tolerably extensive landed estate, and to the steady maintenance of those collateral links which unite the proprietor to his county, and his county to the kingdom. His financial discernment might not have shone in Downing-street, or made a plausible figure on the treasury-bench; but it was sufficient to keep Mr. Ruggs, his steward, within reasonable bounds of speculation, and had more than once attracted the sapient reverence of his brethren of the petty sessions. His eloquence would scarcely have suspended the breath of five hundred startled senators, like one of Canning's electrical orations; or in a seven-hours' process of argument have kept their eyelids unsealed, like a discussion by Brougham. Nevertheless it made a very respectable stand at the after-dinner debates of the squirearchy of his neighbourhood; and his maiden speech at a county meeting, on the poor-laws, or the corn-laws, or the anti-slavery, or anti-knavery associations, or some of those cut-and-dried themes for full-grown gentlemen,—which, like huge

stones upon a hill, are rolled upwards and downwards with succeeding vehicles without a chance of being crushed into the beaten track,—had found its way into the County Chronicle, well italicized with “*hear, hear;*” besides being honoured with ten lines of great-letter eulogy from the pen of the editor.

Sir Brooke Rawleigh, in short, was gifted with just that measure of intellectual power which is either made or marred by education. A preceptor of strong or elegant abilities might have done wonders with him; but his uncle and guardian Sir Robert, who was something of a humourist, contended that wonders were by no means necessary for a young man whose chief business in life would be the management of his Warwickshire estate. Instead, therefore, of sending him to a public school, to become a classical scholar and universal dunce,—and to a crack college to become a fox-hunter and a man of the world,—he was educated at Rugby and Aberdeen;—passed his vacations at his uncle’s country-seat, under the vigilant superintendence of a neighbouring curate;—and on

attaining his majority, and a very ancient baronetcy, made his first appearance in town with notions rather too narrow for the fashionable clubs, and a coat much too narrow for Almack's. In spite however of these demerits and circumscriptions, he was soon discovered to be a very gentlemanly good-tempered young man; and in return for the favourable verdict of society, condescendèd to sacrifice his

old-fashioned tailor and old-fashioned ways. After flirting through half a dozen seasons, yacating through as many summers, and dividing the same portion of winters between Paris and Melton, Sir Brooke Rawleigh came to be regarded in the neighbourhood of Rawleighford as a miracle of fashion,—a model of manners; and when, at eight-and-twenty, an ox was roasted in honour of his union with Frederica Rawdon, the whole county was of opinion, with Lady Olivia Tadcaster, that it was “an unexceptionable match;” and that the new *ménage* would form a very advantageous addition to the neighbourhood at large.

There was only one individual immediately

concerned in the alliance, who appeared at all inclined to question the superlative superiority of Sir Brooke, or the eminent luck of Frederica. The anticipations of the reader are completely at fault:—it was no person of the name of Mapleberry, no Sir Robert Morse, no Lord Putney;—no envious cousin—no officious aunt;—it was her brother, Lord Launceston. By nature gifted with one of those frank and easy dispositions which qualify a man to be called “an off-hand fellow,”—he was so apt to put the whole world in his own confidence, that he could not fail, to regard by comparison, his new brother-in-law as unnaturally reserved and cautious. When he found that Rawleigh had purchased his six-years’ experience of London and Paris society, at no heavier expense than bad debts to the amount of a few dirty hundreds among his intimate friends,—the purchase of three lame horses, — and a damaged cabriolet,—he pronounced the Warwickshire baronet too prudent by half. He had himself been duped to a larger extent long before he left Eton; and when, on arriving in town for the signature of his sister’s

settlements, he accidentally learned from Lady Olivia (with whom he had become a great favourite by resigning into her hands the payment of a mortgage on his estate, and half-a-dozen troublesome annuities), that Rawleigh had rebelled against the article of pin money, and had even succeeded in reducing it from five to four hundred a-year, he began to vote him a very shabby dog, and to hope his little Fred. might not live to repent her choice.

“But, my dear Launceston,” said his mother, who entertained a very high opinion of Sir Brooke, because he travelled in a comfortable, with magnesia lozenges in his dressing-case, and made it a rule never to sit in wet boots,—“I assure you that the diminution was made at Frederica’s desire; and that Rawleigh objects to pin money upon principle.”

“Half the dirty things in this world are done ‘upon principle!’—the word is a universal gag, to prevent people from exclaiming against meanness. I, for instance, am going to give up the Marston hounds this winter, because I find them too

heavy a pull; and I mean to do it ‘upon principle.’”

“And what principle can you possibly put forward, without unhandsomely compromising the memory of your father, by whom they were established?”

“Why, you see, it is my intention to marry next season,—”

“Indeed!”

“*Must*, my dear mother!—no other resource! involved beyond all redemption but an heiress. So I intend to feel persuaded (upon principle) that it would not suit the future Lady Launceston to have the bachelor’s wing at Marston Park filled with riotous fellows, from October till March; or to begin her matrimonial reign by evacuating the territory, and dislodging her husband’s chosen associates;—and thus, ‘upon principle,’ my whole hunting establishment is already off its road to Tattersall’s; and I shall clear off an item of five thousand from my annual expenses, and save my principle and my principal at one and the same time.”

“I rejoice to hear it!—I detest fox-hunting in all its branches,” replied Lady Launceston, whose mind was any thing but inferential; “those horrible hounds were the bane of my wedded happiness. I shall never forget poor dear Lord Launceston’s attack of pleurisy, after riding home twenty miles at a foot’s pace with a broken collar-bone, in a mizzling rain! I am very glad you have got rid of them, my dear William, principle or no principle; and I sincerely hope you may make as prudent a matrimonial choice next season as Frederica.”

“I dare say I shall marry some poor curate’s daughter,—or a popular actress,—or Lady Mapleberry’s governess; for I have made up my mind to an heiress,—and I never executed a plan of my own in my life.”

“I wish you would execute one of mine and your father’s, and marry your cousin, Lady Mary Trevelyan; who has a clear ten thousand a-year.”

“And twenty thousand French fopperies, and Irish vulgarisms, to balance her rent-roll. No! mother;—I shall come to town early in the winter; get a card for the city-assembly, and

bring you home a daughter from Aldermanbury, with the dowry of a Persian princess, and the dialect of a hackney-coachman."

But in the winter, the inconsistent and fickle Lord Launceston, driven from home by his resignation of the Marston hounds, found himself very comfortably established at Rawleighford; having overcome his prejudice against the prudential qualities of his brother-in-law, on finding him a tolerable judge of a horse, and very willing to find his way to cover, provided the hounds met within a moderate distance, and Mr. Ruggs could be persuaded to dispense with his master's society.

A strong proof that Sir Brooke Rawleigh was neither so reserved in heart and hand as had been announced by Lady Olivia, and dreaded by her rattlepate nephew, was his partiality for the society of Frederica's wild brother; and his warm hospitality not only to Lord Launceston, but even to such of his intimate friends as he chose to introduce at Rawleighford. Aware that a long series of extravagance had embarrassed the finances of his brother-

in-law, and estranged him from the habits of tranquil domestic life, Sir Brooke entered with cordial eagerness into the hopes of his mother and sister, that a prudent marriage might serve to alienate him from his boyish follies and expensive companions, and restore to Marston Park its reputation of hereditary respectability.

It was nevertheless true that Rawleigh, during the confection of his marriage settlements, had made many more journeys to Gray's Inn than were good for the wheels of his phaeton, or for his credit with any member of the family,—excepting Lady Olivia Tadcaster. Frederica herself, although as indifferent respecting money matters as prosperity and ignorance of the world could render her, was somewhat dissatisfied that her lover should wish to dispense with the provision allotted for the maintenance of her personal expenses; and without conjecturing that Rawleigh's demur arose from a dread that the management of too large an income might rouse in his bride the latent love of business so offensive in her aunt, or the taste for profusion

which had proved so fatal to the interests of her brother, she was tempted to suspect, at the united instigation of these two relatives, that the advice of Mrs. Martha Derenzy and Mr. Ruggs, might possibly have infected her beloved Rawleigh with an over-solicitude for the things of this world.

In the unqualified happiness of her wedded life, however, Frederica's apprehensions soon wore away. She saw her husband respected by his tenants, his household, his family connexions; she saw that his establishment was arranged upon a liberal plan, and its hospitalities cordially extended to her brother, mother, and relations, even unto the uttermost cousin. The family diamonds had been reset for her use, a handsome equipage appointed for her service;—and having chanced, during her bridal excursion among the Scottish lakes to express a fancy for a pony phaeton, she was greeted on her arrival at Rawleighford with the sight of a pair of grays, whose silken tails swept the ground like *pleureuse* feathers; and an accom-

panying garden-chair, whose fairy dimensions might have been suggested by the wand of Cinderella's godmother.

Under such cheering circumstances, the very name of pin money was forgotten. Among the wedding presents provided by the kind and thoughtful Lady Launceston for her daughter, was a purse of her own workmanship, containing one hundred bright new sovereigns;—and Frederica, amply supplied in her *trousseau* with every imaginable object of feminine luxury, and uninited by the habits of her country-life to frivolous expenses,—found little occasion to visit this maternal treasury; except from occasional motives of benevolence, towards persons whose equivocal reputation excluded their unequivocal wretchedness from the tender mercies of the Rawleighford kitchen, and the official patronage of Mr. Ruggs!

One morning, however,—one of those weary winter mornings, when Sir Brooke was tempted away by her brother to try a new purchase with the hounds,—Lady Rawleigh having devoted the time of their absence to a visit to a distant

neighbour, long owed, and long talked of, chanced to be smitten with all the vehemence of a woman's predilection for a certain white marble fountain in the form of a water-lily with its leaves, which graced the centre of Lady Lawford's little flower-garden. During the solitude of her homeward drive, she could dream of nothing but the enchanting effect a similar fountain would produce in an American garden, which Rawleigh had lately projected for her in a rocky dell of the park, and which was now nearly completed; and some slight recollection of his imputed economical turn disinclining her to propose this luxurious addition to its expenses, she resolved to indulge herself in the purchase on her own account.

"I will make myself a *cadeau* out of my *pin money*," said Frederica; as the monotony of a solitary journey and the regular rising of her postilions in their stirrups, caused her to close her eyes in the corner of one of Adams's somniferous barouches,—while she smiled at the sound of a word which had proved so unpalatable from the lips of her aunt Tadcaster.

“Lady Lawford assures me that beautiful fountain cost her only seventy guineas; and as I never want any money, I cannot employ my allowance better than in the embellishment of Rawleighford.” As soon as she arrived at home, the order was eagerly despatched to Lord Lawford’s statuary in Portland-road; and Frederica, by way of rendering the affair a pleasing surprise to her husband, was careful never to allude to the flower-garden at Elvington. She entertained not the slightest suspicion that Sir Brooke had already commissioned Lady Olivia to procure him from her agent at Florence, a far more beautiful fountain; with a view to perfect the fairy retreat he had provided for his adored wife!

At length, in despite of the foxhunters, and of the grumbling of Mr. Ruggs, the warm breath of April came sighing over the lawns of Rawleighford. The verdure and reviving flowers soon gave tokens of its influence; and, on the first promise of returning summer, Sir Brooke and Lady Rawleigh set forward to take possession of the smoky, dingy, inconvenient

house in Bruton-street, which six hundred guineas was to make their own for the season. The prospect of being once more settled near her mother, fortunately closed the ears of Frederica against the discontents of her whole establishment. No sooner had they arrived in town, than away she flew to Charles-street, leaving the housekeeper to despond over the deficiency of blankets, stoves, and store-rooms; and the butler giving warning to Sir Brooke, that so damp a pantry was incompatible with the interests of his gout, and of the service of plate.

Lady Rawleigh was already prepared, by a letter from her mother, to find a stranger installed in her establishment;—a young person named Elbany, who had been well recommended to her as companion; for poor Lady Launceston, having no longer Frederica's music to cheer her dowager evenings, Frederica's bright eyes to thread her needles, and Frederica's sore throats to task her maternal anxieties, had begun to fancy herself most desolately lonely; and had finally been compelled to have

recourse to the *Morning Post* advertisements of "A young lady of genteel connexions, unexpectedly reduced from affluence, &c. &c." Her daughter, indeed, was too affectionately disposed towards her to feel any thing but satisfaction that she should have been enabled to domesticate under her roof a person so accomplished, so goodhumoured, so companionable, and so meritorious, as this Miss Elbany was described to her by Lady Launceston. Still, Frederica could not help feeling that the curtesy dropped to her, and the glance bestowed upon her by "the companion" on quitting the drawing-room, were somewhat more familiar and inquisitorial than she had been prepared to expect from such a personage. The first impression was decidedly unfavourable to the young lady of genteel connexions.

Nor, in the course of her next morning's conversation with Lady Launceston, did her feelings soften towards this paragon of the toad-eating species. Lady Rawleigh had arrived in Charles-street, overflowing with such filial yearnings of heart as an only daughter might

be supposed to feel after a separation of eight months,—the first of her life—from her only parent; for in spite of Sir Brooke's invitations, her ladyship of Launceston had been far too apprehensive of damp beds, and inn-infections, to venture as far as Rawleighford. And now, when poor Frederica had so much to say of her new home,—her domestic arrangements,—her brother's reformation,—her pony phaeton, her harp, her flower-garden,—and all the innumerable instances of Rawleigh's kindness,—her narratives were nipped in the bud by the eagerness with which Lady Launceston proceeded to enlarge on the excellences of her new companion. Nay! once when Lady Rawleigh was describing to her mother how considerate an assistant she had found at Rawleighford rectory for her charitable labours, and how orthodox and exemplary a curate they possessed in Dr. Fisher, she was cut short by her preoccupied auditress, with "*Dr. Fisher?*—a medical man? Do you know, my dearest Fred., I could not persuade Miss Elbany to see a medical man last week, all that I could say or do!—although

I assure you she had a catarrh which would have made many people look serious! At dessert, she sneezed four or five times running; and yet she would not hear of a basin of gruel when she went to bed."

"And Wrightson's gruel is so excellent," observed Lady Rawleigh,—angry with herself for being angry with her mother's foible. "However, my dear mamma, you will not require so much of Miss Elbany's attention now that *I* am come back. I shall be constantly here of an evening, and you must let me prepare your work, and read to you, as I formerly did;—and our dear happy old times will come over again,—only that we shall now have a cheerful addition to the family circle."

"Ah! my dear Fred., you show your usual discrimination! Miss Elbany will, *indeed*, be a cheerful addition to our family circle. But do not talk of the good old times coming over again; those days, child, are past for both of us. When a woman marries, it is written that she shall leave father and mother; and cleave to her husband; and when I went up to sit

and cry in your dressing-room, my dear Frederica, on your wedding-day, I felt that you were lost to me;—that you never would or could be with me again as in times past.”

There were many things in this speech which grated on the ear of Lady Rawleigh. In the first place, her “cheerful addition” had referred unequivocally to her husband,—she was by no means anxious to regard the companion as a fixture in the domestic circle;—and having at present no family of her own, to estrange her affections and divert them into a new channel, she thought her mother a little premature in announcing their alienation. But she came there to be kind and happy; and was determined not to indulge her own petulance at the risk of vexing Lady Launceston.

Again she plunged into the history of her country neighbourhood;—her presidency over a ball at the county town; her plans of London gaiety; her ensuing presentation, her first appearance at Almack’s as a bride, and all those numerous feminine trivialities, which had formerly excited the coincident interests of mother

and daughter. But although Lady Rawleigh received with great indulgence and sympathy the interruption of Lady Launceston in announcing the distribution of Chloe's recent nursery of puppies, she was again moved almost to an irritable feeling, when her mother startled her in the midst of a description of the gray chintz-drawing-room opening into the conservatory at Rawleighford, with "You cannot imagine, Fred., how much Miss Elbany has improved the appearance of *your* old room, by moving the bed nearer to my dressing-room door, and placing the wardrobe next the window. It really looks quite a different place now; so much more light and cheerful. But then she always has things in such order!—You will find her, my dear, a very superior young woman."

Frederica took leave as speedily and affectionately as she could;—but in truth there was something in all this³ she did not like. It appeared to her that had her mother quitted for ever an habitual chamber in *her* house, she would have retained every object sacredly in

its original position; nor permitted a stranger—*an hireling*—to pollute it by her habitation. She recollected how Lady Launceston used to creep into that room at night when *she* had retired to rest indisposed, especially with the memorable post-Almack's nervous headaches;—how often she had woken and found her mother sitting watching by her bedside; and she could not bear to think of “the companion” living in the same close and affectionate vicinage to Lady Launceston's apartment. She arrived in Bruton-street, and dressed for dinner, in any thing but charity with Miss Elbany and her multifarious virtues and qualifications.

CHAPTER III.

Petit monstre divin, lutin indéchiffrable,
Qu'il faudroit étouffer—si elle n'étoit adorable.

LA COQUETTE CORRIGÉE.

HAD it not been for the warmth of filial duty and affection which recalled her to her mother's neighbourhood, Frederica would have been well contented to pass the first spring of her married life at Rawleighford. At a distance from Almack's and the Opera, and all the pomps and vanities of London life, her contempt for the mere frippery of society had been extremely philosophical. She listened to the nightingales at Rawleigh-glen, and cared not for Pasta; she sentimentalized over the setting sun upon her own Avon, and cared not for the brilliant ball-room at Devonshire House.

But "*l'appétit*," says the proverb, "*vient en mangeant*." After a morning's round of busy idleness—after having seen a case just arrived from Herbault unpacked in Maradan's ante-room, and perceived the contemptuous glance cast by Dévy on her last season's bonnet,—she began to experience a reviving interest in the minutiae of female existence. She felt that the finery of her *trousseau*, which had worn the newest gloss of novelty in Warwickshire, was obsolete in town; that her waist was too short, her dress too long, to appear with credit in a London ball-room;—and by the time she had paid her subscription at Ebers's, purchased a few new canezous at Harding's, replenished her dressing-box at Delcroix's, and her writing-box at Houghton's, she found herself in that elation of spirits which a first morning passed in the hurry of the metropolis is apt to infuse into a person, whose head is bossed with the organ of acquisitiveness, and whose pocket is garnished with a well-filled purse. Her last errand was a morning visit to her friend Mrs. William Erskyne, whose career of fashionable girlhood had

been contemporary with her own; and to whom she had officiated as bridesmaid a few months previously to her own marriage. Louisa Erskyne was a very popular little woman, with no greater sin upon her shoulders than a very empty head with a very pretty face;—keeping her husband and father in a perpetual consternation of anxiety by her inconsiderate levities, but remaining a prodigious favourite with the world in general.

“My dearest—dearest Frederica!” exclaimed Mrs. Erskyne, throwing her arms round Lady Rawleigh, “how happy I am to have you here again. How do you like my new house and all my belongings?—For my part I am growing exceedingly disgusted with them! Ever since I paid a visit to Lady Axeter, in Belgrave-square, I have detested the sight of this old family mansion, with its square staircase and narrow doorways; and I intend that Erskyne shall neither eat, drink, nor sleep,—or what he cares for more, neither hunt nor shoot,—till he has settled me in the Belgrave *quartier*, and let this ponderous old relic of the middle ages to some city knight.

It would be the very house for a popular dentist, où l'on fait antichambre."

"It is well for you that Lady Drusilla Erskyne cannot rise from her grave and hear you utter such treason!"—

"And now tell me a little about Warwickshire;—are the people tolerably humanized?—How glad I am that Erskyne is not afflicted with a family-seat!—I should so abhor the sight of the avenue—the sound of the dinner-bell, and the rooks, and the still more atrocious cawing of the country neighbours!"—

"But we have neither avenue nor rooks at Rawleighford; and our neighbourhood is considered remarkably good."

"Spare me the definition of what is called a remarkably good neighbourhood;—I know it by heart. A fat D.D. rector, with two exemplary daughters in green veils;—a Sir Marmaduke and Lady Domesday, with their park-paling white with age, like their own wigs, and covered with lichen like their own chins;—a new Lord Furbish, with a new Nashional palace,—his plantations

too young to furnish a birch broom, and his service of plate deeply pitted with the recent impressions of Goldsmith's Hall; a—"

"No, no, no!" cried Frederica, laughing. "Wrong from beginning to end!—Sir Brooke, the only baronet in the neighbourhood, dates from the Restoration: our neighbour the Lord Lieutenant, is of Norman extraction, and derives his coronet from the field of Cr ssy; while our rector is a fashionable dean, his lordship's youngest brother!"

"Well, well!—I may have exaggerated the sins of your neighbourhood, but I have ocular demonstration, my dear, of your own. Are you not ashamed to show yourself in that quizzzy pelisse?—fringed too!—my maid has thrown away hers these three months. I do not think I shall allow you, Fred., to pass another winter in Warwickshire, to get tanned, and shapeless, and unfashioned in this way. While you have been leading the life of a cauliflower, I have had such a delightful season at Brighton!—a succession of dinner-parties and balls—quite an echo of London. Do you know I have not

passed a *tête-à-tête* evening with Erskyne, half a dozen times since we married:—after all, there is nothing so *very* tremendous in the dulness of domestic life!”

“ We are rather *fond* of the seclusion of the country. I came up to town chiefly to see my mother.”

“ Yes, yes! people generally have a convenient dowager mother, or grandfather, whom they fly to town to visit when they grow tired of themselves, and their country-seat. And now tell me, love, how do you mean to amuse yourself? What have you done—what are you going to do? As soon as you have made yourself fit to be seen, I conclude you will want to show your diamonds at Almack’s? You must call on Lady J——, and write your name at Prince Leopold’s, and the Duke’s; and after you have been seen there, you will be asked every where.—What box are you to have at the Opera?”

“ None,” replied Frederica, blushing of as deep a *ponceau* as her ribbons; “ Rawleigh is not particularly *fond* of music; and as he has

had a great deal to do in furnishing his house this year, I have promised him to dispense with the indulgence."

"But *you* used to be so passionately fond of the Opera?"

"And am so still; but I should not like him to incur an expense which might be inconvenient."

"Nonsense, expense!—how I do detest these workhouse grumblings. Have you not seven or eight thousand a-year?"

"Which, as you must be aware, will only just serve to maintain our establishment, and bring us to town for the season."

"When I see Rawleigh I shall insist on his opening his purse-strings;—the first season is much too early a date for stinginess."

"Pray do not even mention the subject. I cannot bear him to think I have a wish ungratified."

"While I am only bent upon the actual gratification of mine. I had set my heart, Frederica, on your sharing my box: I like no female society half so much as yours; and

what can that miserable hundred pounds signify to Rawleigh, compared with the pleasure we shall have in being together?"

"A hundred pounds!—Is it only *one* hundred pounds?—Oh! then I can easily afford myself this little gratification out of my pin money. I have four hundred a-year, and have spent nothing at present."

"While *I* have five, and am over head and ears in debt!—Then I shall consider the matter settled, dearest Frederica; and you belong to me for the season.—May I expect you to-night?"

"On Saturday, if you please," said Lady Rawleigh, rising and taking her leave. "I will not disgrace you by my appearance, till I have in some measure humanized away my barbarous Warwickshire air."

This little affair had been arranged with so much haste and facility, that it never occurred to Frederica she could experience the slightest embarrassment in explaining it to her husband. Yet when she found herself actually seated opposite to Sir Brooke at dinner, listening to

all the news he had heard at the Traveller's, and all the messages he had received for her from different friends in the Park, she began to premeditate her opening phrase for the discussion—a circumstance of rare occurrence with the frank and warmhearted Frederica. But her attention was soon diverted from herself and her opera-box, by the name of “Miss Elbany.”

“I looked in at your mother's as I came home, Fred., to inquire whether she had any tidings of Launceston. You did not tell me what a beautiful girl she has got for a companion; positively I never saw a more superb creature.”

“Those are exactly the terms in which you usually praise Launceston's bay hunter!—Miss Elbany is a fine showy vulgar-looking girl; but much too forward in her manners for her situation in life.”

“*You* pretty little slight goddesses of beauty,” said Sir Brooke, laughing, “are always inveterate against the ox-eyed Junos—such as Miss Elbany: but really, although both tall

and fully-formed, your mother's young friend is neither coarse nor vulgar."

"Pray do not call her my mother's young friend;—I trust this paragon is not to be brought forward in *that* capacity.—I conclude her office in Charles-street is limited to winding silk for Lady Launceston—opening and shutting the wicket of Chloe's basket—and playing piquet when mamma is out of spirits."

"Very much like the sentence of condemnation passed upon Squire Thornhill in the Vicar of Wakefield, as a punishment for running away with Miss Primrose!—But seriously, my dear Frederica, I never heard you speak or judge so ungenerously before."

Lady Rawleigh blushed over her wing of the chicken, for her conscience convicted her of all the meanness of jealousy;—*not* of the superior charms of this importunate Miss Elbany, but of the interest she had contrived to excite in the bosoms of all her nearest relatives. Never, in fact, had poor Frederica passed a more comfortless dinner! She had a circumstance weighing on her mind which she was reluctant to

report to her husband; and she could forgive neither her mother's companion, nor her mother's daughter, for their rivalry in Lady Launceston's affections.

"I have promised to go to Lady Huntingfield to-night," said she, in a somewhat peevish accent, as she sipped her coffee: "she is to have some very good music; and I ventured to answer for *you*."

"Did you?" said Sir Brooke, who had niched himself into one of Gillow's anodyne chairs, and was enjoying that species of chaotic mental vagary, in which country gentlemen, who devote six months of the twelve to the suppression of the fox, are dozily apt to indulge after a dinner of three courses. "I am sorry for that;—I hate dressing after dinner, just when one wants to be comfortable. And do you know I half promised we would drop in on your mother;—she has a bad cold—and said something about whist;—and *there*, you know, my boots will be admissible."

"I am sure some men look on the faculty of wearing dirty boots as one of the main in-

dulgences of human existence !” murmured Frederica.

“I have been riding all the morning, or I should not have appeared at table with *you* in my boots,” said Rawleigh, somewhat roused by this conjugal reflection ; and exhibiting a pair of Hoby’s faultless productions with their French varnish most blamelessly unspecked. And he hitched himself still more commodiously into his Morocco dormitory, doubly resolved not to go to Lady Huntingfield’s.

“Mamma keeps such early hours when she is indisposed,” resumed Frederica, sorry she had unnecessarily affronted her husband’s boots, “that perhaps I had better order the carriage without further delay ?”

“The carriage ?—oh, no !—do let us walk ; it is a beautiful night, and we can take the key and cross the square to Charles-street ; unless, indeed,” continued Sir Brooke, opening his sleepy eyes, and fixing them good-humouredly upon his lovely wife, “you intend to crush poor Miss Elbany’s pretensions at once, by appearing in full-dress ?”

“Miss Elbany!—I had forgotten her very existence!—and I will be ready for you in a moment,” said Lady Rawleigh, ringing for her maid and her shawl, that she might incur no further suspicions of coquetry by retiring to her dressing-room. And being speedily equipped in her Rawleighford garden attire, she looked so pretty, and reminded him so strongly of home, that Sir Brooke, in spite of her sarcasm on his negligence of dress, held her very closely and fondly upon his arm during their short journey to the residence of Lady Munceston.

The ears of the gentle Frederica, which had prepared themselves for the pianissimo tones exacted by her mother on occasion of colds or headaches, or such minor indispositions as could be permitted to take their course without the aid of a nightcap and Dr. Camomile, were something startled as she trod upon the muffling Axminster stair-carpet,—where the “blind mole” was rarely permitted to “hear a foot fall,”—by peals of vehement laughter proceeding from the drawing-room; and the words, “that horrid

Miss Elbany!" were rising to her lips, when the announcement of "Sir Brooke and Lady Rawleigh, my lady!" whispered towards her mother's easy chair, produced a shout of "Ha! Rawleigh, my dear fellow—I'm glad to see you!" from her brother.

Lord Launceston, who was unceremoniously stretched at full length upon his mother's damask sofa, with boots far less guiltless of offence than those of Sir Brooke, having arrived unexpectedly in town to dinner, had found his spirit moved by the sight of Lucy Elbany's bright eyes, to exert himself far more for the amusement of his ladye-mother, than he had ever done before in the course of his six-and-twenty years; and it appeared to Frederica that her visit to Charles-street, which was to cost her the sacrifice of Lady Huntingford's concert, was any thing but acceptable to the parties most concerned. She thought "the companion" made more fuss than was necessary in ringing for an addition to the tea-table, and in hoping Lady Rawleigh would not find the room too warm; while, in fact, poor Frederica

was only hurt to find any person but her mother doing the honours of *that* room to her at all. It had been the scene of her own progress from childhood to maturity; of her affectionate attendance upon her parents; of the courtship and acceptance of her dear Rawleigh; and *there*—even there—sat the companion;—hoping she did not feel the wind from the door, and inquiring whether she preferred black or green tea.—Officious creature!

But if her presidency at the tea-table was offensive, what could be said of her interference at the whist-table;—wheeling round Lady Launceston's chair, adjusting the candle-shades, sorting her cards, counting her tricks! Frederica actually shrugged her shoulders with irritation!—for even Sir Brooke, usually so quiet and reserved in his address to strangers, took it into his head to utter the most extravagant compliments to Miss Elbany's graceful assiduities; while Lord Launceston made secret signs to her of somewhat contemptuous admiration of his mother's protégée, and of Rawleigh's undisguised admiration.

Surprised, vexed, and mortified, Lady Rawleigh lost rubber after rubber, to the indignation of her brother, and the triumph of her husband; and she was heartily glad when ~~her~~^{her} mother's small covered basin of Dresden china made its appearance, with two taper sticks of dried toast; and when, at this accustomed signal, Chloe jumped up from her basket to yelp her vesper adieu to the butler, and give the signal for a general move.

"Now then!" thought she, as she found herself once more among the rustling lilac-bushes in Berkeley-square, "now, while he cannot observe my embarrassment, I will tell him the history of the opera-box.—I have been committing a little extravagance this morning," said she aloud, somewhat intimidated by the sound of her own voice.

"So I perceived by the silver paper parcels lying ~~on~~^{on} your dressing-room table. I hope there is a handsome present for *me* in the collection?"

"Oh! something far worse than you dream of!—*Those* were little mother-of-pearl fopperies

for my boudoir at Rawleighford ; but my *crime* is one of far greater enormity than could be committed at Howell and James's."

"I do not believe it, Frederica, for two reasons ; first, because you are too reasonable to be wantonly extravagant at any time ;—and secondly, because I ventured to confide to you the necessity for a little prudence, to set us off clear in the world next year."

"But this weighty affair does not concern Mr. Ruggs and his financial budget ; it is a private business relating to my pin-money."

Frederica fancied she could detect a little start on the part of her companion at the word, as if it were displeasing to him.

"If it is a *private* business, my love, you need scarcely confide it to me."

"Oh ! it is only private as far as regards the ways and means ; it involves your person and consent quite as much as mine. I have engaged to take half Louisa Erskyne's opera-box ; and I hope you will not refuse me the favour of accepting one of the tickets ?"

Unfortunately they had just arrived at the

interposing gate of the square; and °Sir Brooke deliberately unlocked, swang open, and relocked it, and even crossed over to the pavement, before he attempted a reply. Frederica was apprehensive she should have to repeat the phrase she had found it so inconvenient and disagreeable to utter;—and when at length he commenced his answer, it was far more formal and unaffectionate than she was in the habit of receiving from his lips.

“I was not aware that I had ever refused any request of yours;—and when I proposed to you to forego the Opera for the present season, I acted, my dear, on your assurance that you had not the smallest inclination for a box, and that you should find your private engagements quite a sufficient tie upon your time. I am sorry you deceived me; and still more sorry that the first use you make of your independence, will bring you in such close contact with a woman so notoriously giddy and misguided as Mrs. William Erskyne.”

“I have no reason to think ill of my friend Louisa,” said Lady Rawleigh, with her heart

swelling under the first reproof she had ever received from her husband. "You always desire me to consult my own inclinations on such trivial occasions; and I conceived it must be a matter of indifference to you whether one hundred pounds of my allowance were paid to Ebers, or to Girardot.—However, since you disapprove this Opera scheme, I will write to Mrs. Erskyne, and persuade her to excuse me."

"By no means!—I would on no account have you provoke the attention of one of the most mischievous tongues in London to any difference of opinion existing between us. Nay!—to show you that I entertain no harsh feeling on the subject, I accept your proffered ticket; and will share with you an amusement which you rejected a fortnight ago,—as I then hoped—in compliment to me. And now let us discuss something else.—Did you ever see Launceston in such spirits?—He talks of passing the season in town,—asked me to look out for a pair of horses for him,—and wants you to make a water-party."

"And include Miss Elbany?"

“ I should think you very unkind to omit her; and so handsome and agreeable a girl would make a charming addition. I am glad we took this house in Bruton-street,” he continued, knocking at his own door, “ instead of the one Mrs. Derenzy wrote to us about in Cavendish-square. It will enable us to see a great deal of your mother;—and really, Frederica, we can *now* make up a very pleasant little family-party among ourselves.”

“ Again that odious Miss Elbany!” thought Frederica, as she ran up stairs towards her dressing-room. And she closed her eyes that night, with a heart more resentfully disposed towards Sir Brooke, than she had ever known it since the days of Laura Mapleberry and the nervous headaches.

CHAPTER IV.

All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded—wisdom in discourse with her
Loses discountenanced—and like folly shows.

MILTON.

THE following morning had been anticipated by Lady Rawleigh as one of considerable personal interest. She was to decide on the dress for her presentation; and Mrs. Erskyne had good-naturedly promised to come and assist her choice with all the discrimination of her feminine tact and experience. But Frederica felt so discomfited by the strong disapprobation expressed by Sir Brooke of her friend Louisa, that all her coquetry on the subject of her dress was chilled into indifference; and she would have been perfectly satis-

fied to make her appearance at St. James's in the train of rose-coloured brocade, in which Mrs. Martha Derenzy paid her devoirs to Queen Charlotte on occasion of the birth of the Bishop of Osnaburg; a substance boasting the consistency of a wainscot of moderate solidity.

At two o'clock, however, when the purple-edged bandboxes of Madame Girardot were deposited by Mademoiselle Estelle upon the sofas and tables of her dressing-room, and when—with closed doors and the gallery cleared—the blondes, and satins, and *moirés*, were exhibited to the admiration of Louisa, of her fair self, and of Mrs. Pasley her lady-in-waiting, the thermometer of Frederica's vanity rose even to fever heat; and she soon became as deeply involved in the comparative merits of jonquil and amber, as the renowned Mrs. Bellamy in those of her Statira costume! On finding from Mademoiselle Estelle that her former rival, Laura Mapleberry, was to be presented at the same drawing-room in her bridal capacity as Lady Lotus, she actually caused

her jewel-box to be opened, that she might try the effect of her wheat-ears and diamond necklace upon the violet satin and *vert-bourgeon* velvet, between which her choice was undecided!

“But my dear,” exclaimed Mrs. Eskyne, “surely you are aware that it is *de rigueur* for a bride to be presented in white?”

“But Lady Lotus is to make *her* appearance in the spotless purity of white crape and pearls; and as I have really no intention of contending with the dazzling insipidity of her flaxen locks and snowy apparel—”

“You think of crushing her in diamonds and imperial purple!—Quite right, my sweetest Frederica; I am charmed to perceive that you assume a little spirit. You must have a flounce of that beautiful blonde to relieve your splendours, and you will be *grandiose comme une reine!*”

Lady Rawleigh was by no means satisfied that her dear friend was not quizzing her vanity; but between hers, and Estelle’s, and Mrs. Pasley’s flatteries, and the tempting union

afforded by the brilliants and the glistening satin as it was confronted with the sunshine by the expert hand of the *modiste*, she was prevailed on to select a dress at least thrice as splendid as she had originally intended.

“I own I am anxious that Rawleigh should be gratified by my appearance on such an occasion,” thought Frederica, as she replaced the sparkling wheat-ears in Pasley’s hands. “And as no one has any right to interfere with the distribution of my *pin money*, my pardonable extravagance will in this instance pass unreprieved.”

“Heigh-day!—the doors locked?—what mysteries are on foot?” cried a loud voice in the corridor, while the handle of the dressing-room door was violently agitated. “My dear Frederica, I beg I may not intrude,—I would not disturb you for the world;—but I *have* something *very* particular to say to you, and I met Sir Brooke in Bond-street, who assured me that I should find you at home, and disengaged. Yes! my dear,—I left a very interesting sale of marbles unfinished at Stanley’s

in order that I might not lose the opportunity of finding you alone."

"Not *alone*,—but always very happy to welcome you," said Lady Rawleigh, unlocking the door to admit Lady Olivia Tadcaster, whom she sincerely wished back again in the Rotterdam steam-packet.

"What have we here, my dear, what have we here?—You know I like to see pretty things!—Oh!—your 'court-dress;—well, what have you chosen?—not violet I hope.—You will be taken for a Bishop's wife, or daughter,—or grandmother, if you intend to bury yourself in that horrible flounce!" continued Lady Olivia, as Mademoiselle obligingly withdrew the rustling tissue-paper from the cases, to gratify the inquisition of a lady whom she eyed with some contempt, askance, as having "*bien l'air d'une commère-épicière.*"

"Ah! my dear Mrs. Erskyne, how do you do?—Sorry I have not been able to leave a card at your door, but I only returned from the continent three days ago; and I have been all the morning at the Treasury, trying to get a

private order to pass my baggage. I fancy I am as well known at Dover as the signal-post; I often tell Bermingham the Commissioner, he ought to give me a per-centage for helping him through his business.—My dear Frederica, you are keeping this young person waiting; do send her away with her rattle-traps, for positively I cannot allow you to be imposed upon with the purchase of such obsolete splendours; you will look like a last year's number of the *Journal des Modes*.—Mademoiselle, these flowers are quite out of date;—I was with Herbault only last week, and—”

“ *C'est possible, Miladi,*” said the little *modiste*, her eyes darting pins and needles at the intrusive advice of a woman in a hat like a custard-cup; “ *mais cependant—*”

“ *Cependant,*” said Lady Rawleigh, determined to maintain her independence, “ I have *ordered* my dress; and I am satisfied Madame Girardot will give it an *air distingué*, however faulty may have been my own taste in the selection.”

“ Girardot!!—I cannot hear of your having

your dress of Girardot!—Mrs. Pasley, have the goodness to show that young person down stairs; I wish for a little conversation with my niece. My dear Frederica! are you mad to throw away your money in this sort of frivolous manner? My carriage is waiting;—I have twenty minutes to spare; and I will take you to Sewell and Cross's, or Waterloo House, where we can inquire the price of white satin!—I dare say Mrs. Erskyne will come with us?"

"Thank you, Lady Olivia; I have no hope that my life will last long enough, to waste any part of it in dancing attendance at the counter of a bargain-shop. Maradan and Triaud save me the degrading detail of knowing how many yards of tiffany and ribbon it requires to make me endurable. Farewell, — dearest Fred.— I shall see you to-morrow night at the Opera; and pray bring me word that you have committed no infidelities, to Girardot and the violet satin."

"That is a very lightheaded unprincipled little person!" said Lady Olivia, throwing herself upon the sofa, and crushing a bouquet of pink

Cactus, left there advisedly by Mademoiselle Estelle. "I hope, my dear niece, you will not pass much of your time in her society;—I shall certainly give my advice to Sir Brooke upon *that* subject, the very first time we meet. Well,—Frederica, I have been sitting with your mother this morning; and my visit has made me *very* uneasy on her account."

"Indeed! is her cold increased?"

"Increased!—how *could* it possibly increase? I drove down yesterday to the Strand, to the only shop in London where one is sure of getting genuine Welsh flannel, and bought two yards, which I wadded into a breastplate with my own hands.—Did you ever see what I call one of my woollen cuirasses?—And then I went on to Newbery's in St. Paul's Churchyard, for some pectoral essence of Tussilago, and some coltsfoot lozenges in case she should not like it in a fluid state;—so that, of ~~course~~ course, I was not surprised this morning when I breakfasted with her to find her greatly relieved."

"Then what makes you anxious about mamma?"

“Her folly, my love,—her folly!—What madness can possibly put it into her head to settle a designing young creature like that odious Miss Elbany, in the house with my nephew?”

“But Launceston never lives in Charles-street; he is staying at the Clarendon.”

“I can only assure you I found him quietly taking his chocolate in my sister’s dressing-room this morning; with that Miss Elbany smiling and blushing at him like a crocodile.”

“Artful creature! But, my dear aunt, you must be dreaming!—Launceston was never out of his room in London before twelve o’clock in his life. Nothing less important than a fox persuades him to overcome his natural indolence.”

“And a greater fox than your mother’s companion never put forth its attractions.”

“I am quite of your opinion; my prejudices against that Miss Elbany require no aggravation. But what can we do?—To warn Launceston against the danger would perhaps in-

sinuate a notion into his head, which might not otherwise find its way there."

"Oh! I see exactly how it will be!—My poor nephew, who is too indolent to go through the labour of making himself agreeable in his proper sphere, will be captivated by the cunning of a fine showy girl,—always at hand to amuse and flatter him;—and Marston Park will become the prey of a pack of needy adventurers."

"And poor William fall into hands unworthy to influence his fine ingenuous disposition!"

"Believe me I am much too well acquainted with his fine ingenuous disposition to think of opposing his evident admiration for this vulgar creature,—who looks just like the heroine of a parody at the Porte St. Martin; for I know if he suspected a combination against him, he would run away with her to-morrow to prove his independence. But you must persuade Raleigh to pass a great deal of his time in Charles-street, and be on the look out."

"I trust Sir Brooke *will* be frequently there,

because my chief object in town is to attend upon mamma; but I certainly should never dream of taking the liberty to request my husband would act as a spy upon Launceston and—the Companion.”

“Thank Heaven, I am not so scrupulous when the honour of the family is at stake!—I shall make it a point to carry this Miss Elbany about with me on all occasions;—I will take care she is seldom left in Charles-street, in my nephew’s way;—and I know he would as soon find his way into my carriage as into an apothecary’s shop. I make it a rule to keep aniseed in the pockets to guard the lining against moths.”

“But you cannot always be driving about,” said Lady Rawleigh, with an involuntary smile. “Besides, my mother must not be left too much alone.”

“Oh! no,—certainly not; but then I shall make it a rule to dine and pass the evening with my sister,—whenever I have nothing else to do.”

“That is very kind of you.”

“My dear Frederica, I never scruple to sacri-

face my time to the interests of my family. To be sure, to-day I dine with Lady Quidley, who is shut up with a sprained ankle; to-morrow, with old Mrs. Warde, for whom I have brought over a great lumbering *commode*, from Paris; on Thursday, with the Wermingtons, whose son made himself so very useful to me at Carlsbad; Friday a formal dinner in Piccadilly,—all the Tadcaster family to meet me at the Duke's on my return; Saturday I have promised to go down to Richmond, to show the lions at Hampton Court to a charming family of the ancient Bohemian noblesse, whom I met in the packet-boat on the Rhine: and on my return, poor Lady Henry Vardon, the *divorcée*, pays me her annual visit. While *she* is with me, you know my dear, I become a dead letter; for I can neither receive visitors, nor take her to other people's houses,—who, *entre nous*, look upon her as an inadmissible impropriety; and so I generally occupy myself while she is with me in looking over and sorting my papers,—answering my letters,—verifying the inventories of my plate, linen, books, and furniture;—and

receiving the annual documents of my Shropshire estates."

"Very amusing for poor Lady Henry!—But I suppose she finds it preferable to her solitary cottage at Bedfont."

"But I am idling away my morning here!" cried Lady Olivia, suddenly starting up, "and I have fifty appointments before dinner-time. Now do not make yourself uneasy my dear Fred., about what I told you respecting your brother; for though I have no doubt in my own mind that he will throw himself away upon this artful, sycophantic creature, there can be no reason for *you* to distress yourself on the subject. Good-bye, my love:—as I pass Compton House, I shall look in, and send you a few silks for your selection, for this unfortunate court-dress of yours;—something of a pale blue, or a topaz, would look very well with your complexion. Good bye, my dear;—don't trouble yourself to ring the bell,—I shall find my servants in the hall; I never allow them to go down stairs in any one's house except Archdeacon Drinkwater's, where the golden rule is written,

framed, and glazed, in the servants' hall. I have got a little something for you, Frederica, among my baggage, when I can get it up from Dover; a trifle from Giroux, in the Rue du Coq, just to show you, my dear, that I thought of my dear niece when I was in the Splendid City. Well,—I shall certainly stop the carriage, and speak a word or two to Launceston if I happen to meet him;—but, for goodness' sake, not a word of the little hint I' have given you, if he should happen to call *here* this morning!"

"You may rely on me," said Lady Rawleigh, as the receding murmurs of Lady Olivia Tadcaster's *sostenuto*-~~accompaniment~~^{accompaniment} of twaddle, rose fainter and fainter up the well staircase from the hall; and right glad was she to perceive on looking from her dressing-room window in order to assure herself of the actual departure of the fidgetting aunt, that her own britschka was in waiting, to convey her from the united vexations of Miss Elbany—the court-dress—the opera-box—the indiscretions of Mrs. William Erskyne—and the officious interference of Lady Olivia.

CHAPTER V.

A city dame,

Born to adorn with ample garniture
 The pageants of the Guild—and melt away
 Sir Frugal's ingots in the busy mart
 Of west-world foppery,—the play, the ring,
 The motley masquerade.

VANE'S HERACLEA.

LADY RAWLEIGH, who had insensibly subsided from the giddy animation of her early career of fashionable dissipation into the calm domesticity of a country life, persuaded herself during the perfect contentment of her existence at Rawleighford, that she had completely lost her taste for the glare of the ball-room—the stirring tones of the orchestra—the glittering of gaudy apparel. While loitering with Sir

Brooke among the clay-trenches, and gravelly excavations, and burrows of bog-earth,—forming the chaos which promised to assume the horticultural perfection of an American Eden some future summer,—she was tempted to exclaim, like Wolsey at the gates of Leicester Abbey—

Vain pomp and glory of the world—I hate ye !

But the heart of the country clodpole responds not more readily to the pipe and drum with which the cunning sergeant baits his recruiting-hook in the village market-place, than that of a woman born and educated in and for the great world, to the harmonious discords of clashing carriages, yelling link-boys, swearing coachmen, and reproving police-men. Seated beside her friend Louisa Erskyne in the unlucky opera-box, with the consciousness of Nardin's hand in the matchless distribution of her curls, and of Storr and Mortimer's supreme art in the arrangement of the emeralds, her mother's gift, which shed their pale reflections for the first time upon her cheeks,—she fancied

that, her vivid impression of self-satisfaction was solely derived from the pathetic tones of Malibran, the well-attuned precision of the symphonies breathed in her ears, and the comprehensive charm of a combination of "sweet sights, sweet sounds, sweet sentiments."

But it was not so!—Lady Rawleigh's animated interest in the scene arose chiefly from the gratification of her own vanity; combined with that buoyancy of temperament which is the result of youthful health and innocence of heart. She would in fact have been quite satisfied with herself and all around her, had not Mrs. Erskyne in a momentary *tête-à-tête* interlude of the successive coterie which had enlivened their box, congratulated her at once on her good looks and good fortune.

"You are *en bonheur* to night, Frederica, I never saw you so pretty; and Lord Calder evidently visited us to form his judgment of the *débutante*."

"What *débutante*?—Is there a new dancer?"

"Dancer?—absurd!—as if a man with a claim upon the subscription of Chalk Farm

would bury himself at the back of a box like this, to decide on the merits of a dancer!—It was *yourself*, my dear, on whom he was passing sentence ; and by to-morrow night your fate and fashion will be decided in all the clubs of St. James's-street."

"Lord Calder did not appear satisfied with his opportunity of observation," said Lady Rawleigh, smiling—but not disapprovingly—at the levity of her friend ; "for he has given me a general invitation to his suppers."

"And shall you go to-night?" inquired Louisa in a tone of chagrin that the distinction had not been extended to **herself**.

"To night I have promised to go to Mrs. Luttrell's **ball**, who lives somewhere at the antipodes,—in the Regent's-park."

"On Saturday, then?"

"Oh, no—certainly not ;—we never keep late hours on Saturday night, on account of their influence on the order of our establishment on Sunday morning."

"What a prim little Mrs. Goodchild it is!" cried Louisa, with an ironical laugh. "But

next Tuesday—surely you will go to Calder House on Tuesday?”

“Most likely not.—Rawleigh knows very little of Lord Calder; and I am not anxious to entangle myself in his set. I am too vain, and perhaps too proud, to like the society of a man of *his* description.” -

“What description?—your vanity must be ravenous indeed to be dissatisfied with Calder’s evident admiration.”

“But my pride would shrink from all the adulation and *petits soins* requisite with a man of his supremacy, to maintain a place in his good opinion. A sensualist of a certain age, endowed with the gift of a princely fortune to further his inclinations, delights to grace his circle with all the young and pretty women of society; just as Lord Stafford achieves the acquisition of a new work of art, or you and I, Louisa, adorn our drawing-rooms with rose-trees.”

“A very laudable instance of good taste.”

“In *my* opinion nothing can be so hu-

miliating as the exactions of such a coterie. A younger man would consider his gallantry taxed to make himself doubly agreeable, lest he should be eclipsed by the splendours which surround him; whereas at Lord Calder's—"

"We are all expected to be at *his* feet. Very true; and the obligation *de faire sa cour* to any thing but royalty, is a degradation not to be endured by a woman who finds herself an object of adoration elsewhere."

"And of respect in her own happy home," added Lady Rawleigh, in a lower voice,—as if dreading the raillery of her companion.

"The eagerness which all Lord Calder's set display in their rivalry for his notice certainly ~~does~~ provoke me at times; and, after all, I am very glad he has never invited *me* to his suppers."

"After all? Why had you ever an inclination to belong to that clique?"

"Oh! dear, no;—I love my liberty and myself far too well!—But it does look odd, you know, to live so much in the same set, and

never be invited to his parties ; which, let the host be what he may, are certainly the best to be had for love—or fashion.”

Mrs. Erskyne did not think it necessary to enlarge on this vexatious topic ; or to inform Frederica that she had heard in confidence from the dear friend of a dear friend, of a very dear friend of his lordship, that she had been unanimously blackballed on a proposal for her admittance into the coterie at Calder House ; on the grounds of

That sarcastic levity of tongue,

which never fails to create bitterness and misunderstandings, among a set of idle people devoted to scandal and tittle-tattle, but morbidly sensitive whenever the slightest whisper appears to reflect upon themselves.

“ Mrs. Erskyne is a pretty piquante little creature,” had been Lord Calder’s sentence of exclusion ; “ but too *tracassière* to be permitted to ruffle the smooth surface of society with which I am desirous of surrounding myself. Even summer lightning—pretty and playful as it is—is formed by the reflection of some distant storm.”

Sir Brooke now made his appearance in the box, accompanied by a tall, thin, eager-looking man ; whom he named to Lady Rawleigh as his friend Mr. Lexley, and to whom Mrs. Erskyne extended a bow of abhorrent recognition. In truth, she was rejoiced that none of her own fashionable and fastidious dangles happened to be present, to be driven away by the approach of a bore pre-eminently and universally recognised, such as Mr. Lexley ;—a man so flustered with hurry, that he always appeared to have left his mind behind him ; and whose unconnected discourse, and uncollected features, seemed to have been dispersed by the arduous perplexity of business weighing on his responsibility : while, in fact, the only business he had ever transacted in his life, was to sit, session after session, upon a hard bench ; and say, “ Ay,” or “ No,” in the name of one of the most inactive and longsuffering boroughs in his majesty’s dominions !

“ Malibran has been delightful this evening,” observed Frederica, anxious to bestow a gracious reception upon any person qualified by

Sir Brooke as his "friend ;"—however ragged his locks, and uncouth his mode of retaining possession of a full-grown morning hat, bearing visible tokens of Strand manufacture.

"Indeed!—I am glad to hear it. I have only been ~~here~~ a few minutes, and was detained in passing through the room by Lord Warspite ;—a little Admiralty business to be talked over."

"Every one dines so late now," resumed Lady Rawleigh, "that gentlemen have **very** little chance of hearing any thing of the Opera, unless a few determined amateurs who come for the *premier coup d'archet*."

"Dine!" exclaimed Mr. Lexley, horrified that any person could believe *him* **guilty** of the sin of a late dinner during the sitting of parliament ; "I wish I could flatter myself of being so agreeably detained from any engagement for some time to come !—I don't suppose I have passed two hours at table for the last two months !"

"A very harassing session," observed Sir Brooke, sympathizingly.

Mr. Lexley shook his head with a contracted eyebrow, and a desponding lip; while he thumbed his great heavy hat with the industry of a kneader of pottery-ware.

“Any thing doing to night in the house?”

“Nothing *very* important;—the last reading of the salt-water canal bill,—all smooth sailing, or you would not have seen me here. I left Lumber on his legs, and Trap had thrown in a few of his keen discouraging sentences.”

“Like so many drops of vitriolic acid,” observed Mrs. Erskyne, without diverting her gaze from the ballet.

“And of course Sir Bumble Drone, and the other county member, must go through their short generalizing answers. All *that* will last till a quarter before twelve, when the whale-fishery business comes on;—and I **must** be back at one for the division, or I shall get into disgrace and the minority,” said Mr. Lexley with a grim smile, and an elevation of his camelopardic throat, intended to imply the proud consciousness of independence.

“I wonder you venture to be out of the way,”

said Mrs. Erskyne gravely. "Even on questions where it is not your intention to speak, I have no doubt you are incessantly bored by reference for precedents. Erskyne tells me that no one could get on without you;—now this whale-fishery!—I dare say, if the truth was known, Mr. Lexley, *you* were in the secret of that article on the subject in the Quarterly? Surely, surely, you ought not to be out of the way when it is before the house?"

"Oh! I have still twenty-five minutes at my disposal," said Lexley, taking out a watch of the shape and dimensions of a mortar; "even allowing five, to go round by Arlington-street and pick up my friend Phaganhurst, whom no one can get away from his claret but myself;—we shall want his vote to-night. In the mean time, I have just got a word or two to say to Lord Wilchester, about the Helvoetsluys beacon business, of which he has given notice for Thursday se'nnight; I fancy he is somewhere in the house."

"You will find him in his stall behind the double bass," said Mrs. Erskyne, eager to get

rid of their visitor on any terms. "His bald head is as prominent a feature as that of the new palace."

"Thank you, my dear Mrs. Erskyne—thank you! I never venture among the stalls. If you hazard a word in a tone louder than the pianissimo of Nicholson's flute, every member—that is every dilettante—turns fiercely round, as if you were out of order."

"Do you intend to stay out the ballet?" inquired Sir Brooke, disgusted by the want of courtesy displayed by Mrs. Erskyne to his friend. "If you think of going to Mrs. Luttrell's, had I not better inquire for the carriage?"

"Pray do," replied Frederica, as Louisa turned to welcome the entrance of Sir Robert Morse, the mutual flirt of their young-lady days, "or rather let us go at once."

"Well, my dear Fred.!" exclaimed Rawleigh, drawing up the window of the chariot, while—after a fierce contention with a wrangling mob of coachmen, and a confused phalanx of carriages, they worked their way through Regent-

street, in the direction of the Regent's-park,—
“how glad I am to find myself once more
alone with you; I have something of consequence to say.”

“Nothing about Launceston, I hope?”

“No!—nor about Miss Elbany,—in spite of Lady Olivia's agonies!”

“She has confided her apprehensions to you, then?”

“Actually stopped her carriage opposite to Boodle's this morning, and sent in her footman to desire I would come and speak to her. *There* I sat closeted with her for a quarter of an hour, listening to her predictions of a marriage between your brother and your mother's companion in an atmosphere resembling that of Savory and Moore's shop; and with the certainty of being quizzed to death on my return to the club, touching this family consultation. But enough of Lady Olivia—*my* business is of a more important nature. Do you know Frederica that, with Lexley's assistance, I have just now a most favourable opportunity of getting into parliament.”

“ But is it worth while to go through all the trouble and expense, with a general election so near at hand ? ”

“ The trouble will consist in passing a couple of hours at the Blue Lion or Black Boar at Martwich ; and the expense will of course be commensurate with the diminished value of the seat. Still it is an expense ; and my only demur on the subject arises from a disinclination to appropriate a considerable sum to the indulgence of my own selfish predilections, after urging economy in our general establishment.”

“ My dearest Rawleigh !—you talk as if I did not participate in your personal pleasures and distinctions ;—as if we had separate interests.”

“ And so we have ! ” answered Sir Brooke, between jest and earnest, but affectionately pressing her hand ; “ remember the pin-money and the opera-box, Frederica. However, I shall write down to Ruggs to-morrow, for the surveyor’s report on the timber of the Oxley estate. Indeed I am pretty sure I can raise the necessary sum without much incon-

venience; provided I can persuade you to make the sacrifice of the new conservatory, and to forgive me if I occasionally bring forward the subject of economy in our domestic arrangements."

"You can have very little confidence in me to make my concurrence a matter of doubt," said Lady Rawleigh, gratified by an opportunity of marking her eager sympathy in her husband's interests; "I will become as prudent as Mrs. Martha Derenzy, emulate her lectures on the advantage of ready-money and discount; and you shall reward me with five *franks* a-day. But what has that tiresome Mr. Lexley to do with the business?"

"I hope you do not allow yourself to be infected by all the silly prejudices and antipathies of your friend Mrs. Erskyne?—Lexley is not a lady's man, I acknowledge; but he is a very useful and active member of society."

"Of society?—he appears to me to forget that he is any thing but a member of—parliament."

"Perhaps he may be a *little* too fond of

fetching and carrying, in the petty business of the House; but notwithstanding his foible, he is a very estimable man,—with very clean hands, and a very sound heart.”

“ Very dirty gloves, and a very intrusive hat ! But how is he to assist you in this borough affair ? ”

“ Why he happens to be just the sort of man people are apt to refer to in the agency of this species of confidential traffic. He has a friend with a seat to dispose of, just now, under circumstances highly advantageous to me ; and I have promised to dine with him to-morrow, and settle the business.”

They were now in the string of carriages leading to Mrs. Luttrell's *fête*, and within view of those elaborate festive preparations, with which persons of moderate means, moderate mansions, and an acquaintance of the moderate class, affect to rival the hospitalities of the Duke of Devonshire or Lady Londonderry. The front of a tolerably proportioned house overlooking the Regent's-park, was converted by the temporary aid of floor-cloth and tar-

paulin, into a conservatory smelling more of Downing's manufactory than of roses and jessamine; while stars of ill-trimmed variegated lamps, flaring and smoking, added their unlucky odours to the malaria of the spot. The hall of Mrs. Luttrell's abode was metamorphosed by a screen of withering laurel-branches into a rural retreat; in which some eight or ten footmen,—with the glaring liveries of the family, hanging voluminously upon the shoulders of half the gang, and betraying them as hirelings for the occasion,—exerted the utmost fury of their lungs to announce the entering guests. It would have been difficult to decide which was the preponderating discord in this house of feasting;—the yells of a band of ill-bred servants,—or the twang of an orchestra, of which the musicians appeared to measure their own merit by the volume of sound they could severally produce.

At the door of the ball-room stood the curtsying and over-heated Mrs. Luttrell; charmed to behold the extent of the mob she had collected to stare at her diamond tiara, and ar-

rayed in a silver tissue robe, studded all over with bouquets of foil, which compelled this most brilliant of hostesses to a standing position. She took care to be engaged in eager conversation when the announcement of "Sir Brooke and Lady Rawleigh," met her ear, in order that her vulgar butler might think it necessary to indulge in a stentorian repetition of the gratifying sound for the edification of the company near the door. Poor Mrs. Luttrell, being strictly confined within the limits of mediocratic society, conceived that a ladyship of any sort was good for something; and had already made up her mind that, since her distant relative had been so aspiring as to unite himself with the daughter of a Viscountess, the name of the Honourable Lady Rawleigh should grace her Morning Post advertisement on the morrow,—in company with "Messrs. Rosin's incomparable band, and Messrs. Gunter's delicacies of the season."

Escaping as quickly as they could from the courtesies of a lady who "'oped they had got up to the door without much difficulty,"

the Rawleighs manœuvred their way round the skirts of a quadrille, which shook the very foundations of the house by its saltatory exertions, into the second drawing-room; where Frederica, by the aid of certain old-fashioned diamond-aigrettes with which she had been intimately acquainted for the last five years, contrived to recognise divers ancient matrons and untireable chaperons—Lady Launceston's former contemporaries at the card-table.

But what was her amazement on perceiving in the midst of one of these grisly groups, her giddy brother!—listening without much show of impatience to the obsequious discourse of a fat middle-aged woman, arrayed in a turban which might have served the Pacha Abomelique in a representation of Blue Beard, at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham!—Lord Launceston started with surprise, but speedily rose and joined his sister and her husband.

“What on earth are you doing here?” whispered Frederica.

“Business, Fred., business!—You see I have a better excuse than yourself; for I should

hardly think *you* would plead either business or pleasure as *your* inducement."

"Hush! Mrs. Luttrell is a distant connexion of Rawleigh's."

"Is that a reason for suffocating yourself with the vapours of lavender-water, huile antique, and hired argands?"

"Have *you* any better motive for your devotion to yonder fair Odalisque?"

"*That* is my future mother-in-law," said Lord Launceston calmly. "You know I have long been in search of an heiress; and these people, who are soapboilers or some such thing, were so obliging as to fall in love with me at Cowes last summer, and save me all further trouble."

"My dear Launceston, you do not really mean that you have serious thoughts of allying yourself with that horrible woman?"

"I never had serious thoughts of any thing in my life; except once when I was going to be flogged at Eton, and had some notion of caning the Doctor by way of preventative. But Mrs. Waddlestone has *very* serious thoughts of allying

herself with *me*. Would you like to see my bride elect?"

"Certainly not *as* your bride-elect," replied Lady Rawleigh; turning with a look of anxious inquiry towards the quadrille, and fixing her eyes upon a juvenile mummy forming a most afflicting miniature of the lady in the turban.

"Quite wrong, Fred!—You have not the least touch of animal magnetism in your composition, or you would have found out your future sister at first sight," said Lord Launceston; smiling, and nodding with an air of good understanding to a fairer and more graceful sylph than ever graced the aristocratic boards of Willis's:—dancing with the gentle tranquillity of Madame Michau's choicest scholar, and dressed with a perfection of elegance which neither the fastidious Louisa Erskyne, nor the still more fastidious Mademoiselle Estelle could have taxed with an error of taste.

"Is not Leonora charming?" said Lord Launceston with an ironical smile.

"Charming, indeed!—but no Leonora *Waddestone* I am persuaded. She must have been

changed in her cradle by a fairy or an Irish nurse."

"The strawberry ripest grows beneath the nettle!"

theatrically mouthed her brother. "You fine ladies, who fancy there lies no salvation without the pale of Almack's, know very little of the superiority of beauty and accomplishment to be met with in the secondary set of London society. Fortunately for me, my beggary brought me among these soapboilers, and brewers, and other nonentities; and I shall consequently bless myself with the *prettiest* as well as the richest wife in the peerage."

"But in sober sadness, I hope you entertain no thoughts of forming this *mésalliance*?" said Lady Rawleigh, and she began to think that even the companion—(if an orphan)—might have been preferable to a Leonora Waddlestone, with such a mother.

"No treason against my Leonora!" said Launceston gravely.

"But against your mother-in-law?"

"What possible fault can you find with her? That crimson satin robe was part of the spoil of

Tippoo Saïb's wardrobe—she told me so herself; and only look at her pearls!—

‘ Each pendant in her ear shall be a province.’ ”

“ Frightful creature !”

“ If you utter one injurious sentence respecting her, I will instantly present her to you;—a punishment I assure you of some severity—for she will take particular care neither to forget nor be forgotten by you.”

“ She certainly appeared very satisfactorily engrossed by her conversation with *you* when I entered the room.”

“ I flatter myself she already loves me like a son; and I am *certain* that she loves me like a lord,—which is a degree of far greater warmth in Mrs. Waddlestone's estimation.”

“ Dearest Launceston!—I am beginning to shudder when you pronounce that detestable name !”

“ Leonora will lose it you know in becoming your sister. I have been dancing with her all the evening, and have only resigned my place to your old friend Colonel Rhyse, that I may enjoy a little of Mrs. Waddlestone's conversation.”

“Again!—*Waddlestone!*—The sound an echo to the sense.”

“Launceston!” said Sir Prooke, who had been detained from their dialogue by the civilities of Mr. Luttrell, a respectable gentleman with very large calves and a powdered head, whom strangers usually mistook for the butler, “it is a rare thing to meet you in a ball-room. Will you make my excuses to Lady Launceston, my dear fellow, and tell her she must be satisfied with Frederica alone to-morrow; for I am obliged to dine with Lexley on particular business.”

“I should think you would dine with the brute on no other motive. However, I will take care of my sister;—there will be a large party in Charles-street to introduce Miss Elbany to all the family.”

“I really think mamma is bewitched by that girl,” cried Lady Rawleigh.

“Who is not?” replied her brother, with something very much resembling a sigh.

“You had better invite your favourite, Mrs. Waddlestone, to join the circle,” said Frederica, peevishly.

“Certainly, if you wish it,” observed Lord Launceston, gravely; and he moved eagerly towards the lady with the pearl pendants, who fanned herself in joyful agitation on his approach.

But Frederica, apprehensive that her giddy brother might really execute his threat of introducing her to his very uninviting friend, now whispered to Rawleigh her anxiety to leave the room. Compassionating her affected fatigue, Sir Brooke extricated her from the crowd; and after standing for a moment in the evergreen hall,—at the door of a supper-room glittering with caramel baskets and pyramids of foil, and savouring horribly of ham sandwiches and negus—Lady Rawleigh’s carriage “stopped the way.” She arrived in Bruton-street only half recovered from the shock of her astonishment and consternation.

CHAPTER VI.

A stately palace built of squared brick
Which cunningly was without mortar laid,
Whose walls were high, but nothing strong or thick,
And golden foil all over them displayed,
That purest sky with brightness they dismayed.
High lifted up were many lofty towers
And goodly galleries far over laid;
Full of fair windows and delightful bowers.

SPENSER.

THE following morning was devoted by Lady Rawleigh, according to a previous engagement, to a humdrum drive in the suburbs with Mrs. Martha Derenzy, her husband's favourite aunt; when for two long hours she found herself condemned to listen to the rheumatic old lady's diffuse details of the domestic arrangements of her neighbours, a Mrs. Scott, a Miss Hunter, and a Mr. Wilson, persons who be-

longed of a sufficiently unpretending degree of life to be within reach of the attractions of her tea-table; and whom Frederica very sincerely wished had superseded her in the pleasures of the present airing. Her thoughts were naturally engrossed by the approaching introduction of a "Miss Waddlestone" into the house of Rawdon!—At one moment, she resolved to exert her most anxious efforts for the prevention of such a catastrophe; at another, the interesting figure of Leonora recurred to her recollection; forcing her to admit that not a single young person of her own rank in society—not even the heiress, her cousin Lady Mary Trevelyan, the object of her former speculations for her brother—rivalled the pretensions of the soap-boiler's lovely daughter.

She could not but reflect with some amusement on the needless pains which poor Lady Olivia Tadcaster had been giving herself, to intercept any possibility of a *tête-à-tête* between Lucy Elbany and Lord Launceston; for although the companion had very judiciously declined the favour of accompanying her ladyship in

her morning's tour of the bargain-shops, she had not been able to elude the vigilance with which the sister of her patroness thought proper to establish herself daily in Charles-street, during the hour devoted to Lady Launceston's siesta, a crisis generally selected by the young lord for his visits of filial duty. Frederica was even cogitating over the necessity of acquainting her aunt with her brother's actual matrimonial views and engagements, when Mrs. Derenzy, suddenly pulling the check-string opposite the entrance-lodge of an immense house at Kensington Gore, put a period to her meditations.

A porter, covered with lace and aiguillettes, having answered the summons, Mrs. Derenzy tendered her visiting card, with the imprudent additional message of "Her compliments—and she was sorry she could not get out, as she had a lady with her in the carriage." Away they drove again; and Lady Rawleigh had not even the curiosity to inquire to whom the house belonged and the message was addressed; when in a few minutes the carriage stopped suddenly.

“What is the matter,” cried the old lady in a fidget of alarm. “Any thing wrong with the harness?” And she let down the window in a prodigious fluster, when a panting footman in a gorgeous livery, similar to that of the porter aforesaid, made his appearance sans hat, sans breath, sans manners;—“Mrs. Waddlestone’s best respects, ma’am, and she hopes you’ll turn back, and ’ll be very happy to see the lady.”

“What *shall* we do, my dear Lady Rawleigh?”

“Waddlestone!” faltered Frederica; “the soapboiler?”

“I fancy Mr. W. is in some kind of business in the city; but their style of living at the west end is quite superior. I assure you nothing can equal the beauty of their gardens; and if it would not be asking too great a favour of you, my dear niece, I should really be glad of an opportunity to visit them this fine morning.”

“By all means then, let us turn back; but as a favour in return, pray dear Madam let me exact a promise of you not to *name* me to

the family; I have motives for the request which I will explain hereafter."

"Certainly—certainly;—but what can I call you?"

"Your niece;—which will fully satisfy the curiosity of Mrs. Waddlestone, touching a person in a shabby bonnet and last year's pelisse."

In fact Lady Rawleigh rather congratulated herself on this opportunity of inspecting the domestic habits of a family, with which she was so soon likely to be connected; and when, on approaching the mansion, she perceived its long vista of conservatories, the marble stands of exotics gracing the lawn, and the swarm of domestics congregated at the hall-door, she was willing to admit that if affluence were the sole object of her brother's matrimonial choice, he was decidedly fortunate in having passed the preceding summer at Cowes.

"Remember!" she whispered emphatically to Mrs. Derenzy, in assisting her up the vast flight of steps.

"I give you my word of honour not to men-

tion your name," answered the old lady, conceiving that this whimsey on the part of her nephew's noble bride must originate in family pride.

"Under *any* circumstances?" persisted Frederica.

"Under any circumstances!" echoed Mrs. Derenzy, casting a glance upon the great Buhl clock which graced a pedestal of *giallo-antico* in the hall, in the hope that luncheon-time—the hour of paté de Périgord, and pine-apples, at Waddlestone House—was not far distant.

Even Frederica, accustomed as she was to the dwellings of the great, felt startled by the profusion and selection of the objects of *virtù* which met her eye on every side.—The staircase was modelled after one of Gandy's superb architectural designs;—and the vestibule through which they passed into the drawing-room, was ornamented by fine copies of the Whetter and Dying Gladiator, and by an original Diana with a greyhound, from the classical chisel of Schadoff.—The soapboiler was evidently a patron of the fine arts.

The saloon into which they were now ushered, was one of those luxurious retreats, which modern refinement delights to decorate with all the triumphs of human genius, and all the useful inventions of human industry. Opening into a conservatory in which tropical plants threw up their palmy leaves into a dome where the slender threads of a *jet d'eau* produced a succession of rainbows, overarching blossoms bright and evanescent as their own hues, it was loaded with all those inviting means of repose, afforded by cushioned ottomans and chairs at every angle of inclination suggested by the fancy of indolence. Jardinières, bright with flowers, were intermingled with triangular perambulators filled with the last new works of the day ; and although five pictures only graced the walls, covered with velvet hangings of a pale fawn colour,—they were five *chef d'œuvres* from the hands of Claude, Hobbima, Ruysdael, Salvator Rosa, and Vandyke ; such as the intellectual eye delights to rest upon with daily increasing partiality, till they become familiar and precious in its estimation as the

faces of those it loves. On one side of the saloon stood a magnificent organ and harp, surrounded by a scattered profusion of music; and near the fireplace a cabinet of exquisite miniatures, which might have been adjudged as the works of Isaac Oliver or Petitot, had not a half-finished performance of similar merit appeared on a little ebony bureau beneath; accompanied by a palette and brushes and the various implements of a fairer artist.

Frederica was startled from an examination of this beautiful collection, by the vociferous entrance of Mrs. Waddlestone; and she had just time to drop the thick Chantilly veil over her face, and hear herself casually announced by Mrs. Martha, as "My niece, from Warwickshire." She had not been deceived in anticipating that the Waddlestones would resolve a nameless niece, in a dress of Quaker-like simplicity, into a *poor relation*,—a species of unsalaried Lucy Elbany; and she was consequently permitted to seat herself at a very satisfactory distance from her hostess, and to listen unmoled to the dialogue with her humdrum relative.

“La!—Mrs. Derenzy, my dear Madam! how *could* you hesitate about bringing your own niece to Waddlestone House! Pray be assured I shall always feel particularly gratified in seeing any of your family, *chez moi*.”

“You are extremely polite, Ma’am;—I am sorry that the state of my health does not more frequently permit me to make inquiries after yours and Miss Waddlestone’s.”

“Thank you, my dear Madam,—thank you; Leonora is as well as the dissipation of the season will allow;—torn to pieces, Mrs. Derenzy, torn to pieces with the pleasing toils of the *grand monde*.—Ah! here she comes,—poor dear;—quite languid with the *fête* of last night; I assure you it was *le point de jour* before we reached Waddlestone House.”

Leonora, dressed in the utmost simplicity of morning dress, now made her appearance from the conservatory; and after a graceful recognition of her mother’s elderly guest, seated herself in a much more courteous vicinity to the anonymous niece, than Mrs. Waddlestone considered due either to her degree or her pe-

lisse. Already she had entered into a desultory conversation with the stranger, touching the state of the weather and its influence upon her flowers; when the attention of both ladies was arrested by the sound of Lord Launceston's name uttered by Mrs. Waddlestone; and neither of them found it possible to maintain their separate dialogue, while so interesting a topic was discussed within their hearing.

“ Yes, Ma'am !—a more charming entertainment I think I never beheld. Mrs. Luttrell is a sweet woman ;—she has diamonds enough to form a moderate-sized chandelier, and I must say she does them ample justice ;—one seldom sees her without them, except at church.”

“ She is a distant connexion of mine,” said Mrs. Martha, eagerly ; “ but her hours and habits are too fashionable for *me*,—I do not see much of her.” †

“ Yes ! she is quite one of the *beau monde* ;—excellent company at her house !—We had Lady Williams, and Lady Thomas, and Lady Smith, and Lady Wilson,—and a vast number of people of fashion. We took our *protégé*,

young Launceston, with us; for I really can't abide that Leonora should dance with indiscriminate partners."

"*Lord Launceston?*" inquired Mrs. Derenzy.

"Oh! his lordship is quite *l'enfant de la famille* at Waddlestone House," said the soap-boiler's lady, looking towards her daughter with her mouth drawn on one side by way of innuendo. "We had Launceston's sister there too,—that little Lady Rawleigh;—but I must own I didn't think much of her; and as to Sir Brooke, he has more the air of an apprentice than of a man of fashion."

"My dear mamma," interrupted Leonora, distressed by her mother's superfluous sarcasms, "surely it is impossible to be more elegant in address or appearance than Lady Rawleigh!"

"I don't know what you call an elegant dress," observed Mrs. Waddlestone; "but I got as near her as possible, and if hers was not Urling's net, I am very much mistaken."

"She ~~is~~ so graceful and ladylike that I own I did not notice her *dress*," said Leonora.

"Sir Brooke and Lady Rawleigh are my

very near relatives!" cried Mrs. Martha Derenzy, gasping with consternation, but not knowing how to terminate the illtimed comments of her hostess.

"I am sure Mrs. Derenzy, my dear Madam, I ask your pardon;—but when one hears people so cried up as Launceston is always crying up this sister of his, it does incline one to be a little severe."

"Brothers are partial judges," said the old lady, fidgetting on her seat with alarm.

"But Colonel Rhyse is not brother to Lady Rawleigh," observed Leonora; "and he has often assured me she is a model of feminine gentleness."

"Oh! Colonel Rhyse makes it a point of conscience to swear to the truth of all Launceston's rhapsodies. However, I dare say we shall have ample means of judging,—I dare say we shall have plenty of Lady Rawleigh's company before we die,—eh! Leonora?"—And again she distorted her mouth by a significant screw.

Leonora, pretending not to hear this coarse apostrophe, which in fact served to colour her face and throat with the deepest crimson, now turned towards her silent companion with some trivial observation respecting her drive; when Frederica, feeling that she was practising a somewhat unfair deception by making herself the auditress of Mrs. Waddlestone's notes explanatory, inquired whether it would be taking too great a liberty to 'beg to accompany her through the celebrated gardens of Waddlestone House. Leonora, ever eager to give pleasure to others, and particularly anxious to divert the attention of the stranger from her mother's satires, instantly rose; and followed by Lady Rawleigh, moved towards the conservatory. But Mrs. Waddlestone, who had heard the petition, and considered it somewhat encroaching on the part of Mrs. Derenzy's humble companion, called out after her daughter—"Now pray, my dearest Leo., don't go to overheat yourself! Put up your parasol, and put on your bonnet; for you know Launceston and

his friend may drop in from minute to minute, and his lordship can't abide to see you scorching your eyes out by a *coup de soleil*."

Leonora promised compliance with these maternal injunctions; and in another minute Frederica found herself alone with her future sister-in-law, in one of the prettiest flower-gardens which ever put forth its roses since those of Armida. She was delighted to perceive that the youthful heiress pointed out to her observation every plant and every rarity really deserving her attention, without the least parade or affectation; and as Leonora stood with her slight figure and silken curls, leaning against a marble vase, in the shadowy coolness of a trelliced walk covered with flowering acacias, Lady Rawleigh was so captivated by her beauty, and so disposed in her favour by the defence she had uttered of her own, that she was half-tempted to claim her at once as a sister. Fortunately, the reminiscence of Mrs. Waddlestone was still sufficiently strong upon her mind, to restrain her within the bounds of prudence.

“I could not have conceived,” said Frederica, “that so secluded a spot existed within a morning’s drive of Bond-street.”—

“Except from the visits of our London friends,” replied Miss Waddlestone, “it forms quite a lonely country-house. I am very much attached to this place. I often think that small as this garden is, I could be content to limit my future existence within its walls.”

“That notion,” thought Lady Rawleigh, “must certainly have originated from her tête-à-tête walks with Launceston in this very *bergeau*! —But Mrs. Waddlestone has been telling us wonders of the dissipated life you lead,” said she aloud. “Surely you would not wish to resign the pleasures of your London season?”

“I would not renounce the society of my intimate friends; but I cannot say the attractions of our general acquaintance would often seduce me from my own happy home. You know,” said Leonora, blushing deeply, and shaking away the curls from her deep blue eyes with a smile of proud humility, “we are but *parvenus*; a ~~set~~ which *here* I can easily forget;

but which is incessantly recalled to me in a London ball-room, either by the want of refinement of our equals, or by the contemptuous bearing of our superiors. That very Lady Rawleigh, of whom we were speaking just now, rushed from Mrs. Luttrell's party, last night, only to avoid an introduction to us;—a fact which I mention to excuse the asperity with which she was mentioned by mamma—who has by nature the most indulgent disposition in the world. I should be sorry that a stranger judged either herself or the object of her strictures, from a few hasty words uttered in a moment of vexation.”

“Believe me, I should not take the liberty”—Frederica began—

“Do not let us say another word on an unpleasant subject,” said Leonora, rallying her spirits, which were evidently in a minor key, “while we have these beautiful Camellias to look at. This delicate flower is the ‘Lady Hume’s blush;’—what a pity that any thing so lovely should be scentless!”—

But Lady Rawleigh, in momentary appre-

hension of her brother's arrival and of the annoying explanation which must ensue, hurried through the lofty greenhouses glowing with blossoms, on pretext of Mrs. Derenzy's impatience; and arrived in the drawing-room at the same moment with a tray, covered with a greater variety of fruit than any place but Ragley Castle, or Owen's shop could possibly rival. She had now the nervous perplexity of seeing her aunt attack a conical bunch of superb Frontignan grapes, which nothing short of ten minutes could possibly suffice to demolish; and very earnestly did she long to take justice, and Mrs. Waddlestone's scissors of embossed gold into her own hands, and curtail the enjoyments of poor Mrs. Martha Derenzy. Dreading every moment to hear the doors thrown open, and her brother announced, she attempted to beguile the time by noticing the pictures decorating the apartment.

"They are indeed matchless," said Leonora, without any affectation of humility. "My father is considered an excellent judge of pictures; and in purchases, has the advantage of

being advised by the most eminent artists of the day, many of whom are constant visitors here. We have very little to do with men of fashion, or men of rank ; But my dear father is highly esteemed by men of genius of all conditions."

It was fortunate for Miss Waddlestone that her mother was uttering her parting civilities to Mrs. Derenzy when Leonora gave utterance to so plebeian a declaration ; and she now bestowed a valedictory curtsey of most contemptuous brevity on the nameless and well-veiled niece who hastily followed her guest from the saloon. Just as their carriage passed the lodge, Frederica perceived her brother and Colonel Rhyse leisurely approaching ; but the unknown chariot of Mrs. Martha Derenzy was of far too gothic a build to attract their attention ; and the remaining way from Kensington Gore to Bruton-street, was enlivened only by the old lady's exclamations concerning the coarse illnature of Mrs. Waddlestone—the excellence of her grapes—the beauty of her daughter—and above all by her own regrets

that Frederica should have exposed herself to a predicament so disagreeable.

“ I see your motive, my dear ma'am ; I can understand your desire to form your unembarrassed observations upon a family with whom you may possibly become more closely united ; but I know not whether most to lament the annoyance to which you have been exposed, or the unequal alliance projected by my Lord Launceston.”

Lady Rawleigh, however, entertained no doubt as to the comparative magnitude of the two evils ; and she dressed herself for the dinner in Charles-street, without having found time to communicate half her distresses to Sir Brooke, or make up her mind as to the extent of the intelligence due to her mother and aunt. Launceston, in his well-appointed but unostentatious bachelor equipage, having called for her before the ceremonies of the toilet were fully concluded, she desired he would proceed and send his carriage back for her, to avoid the inquiries of a tête-à-tête ;

and when his blood-horses a second time skirted within a hair's-breadth the iron-railings of Berkeley-square towards their destination, she could not but contrast their rate of speed with her morning's jog-trot with Mrs. Martha; and even with the sober pace at which Sir Brooke, with his heavy Rawleighford-bred bays, was proceeding towards Westminster and the Lexley consultation.

“And now,” said Frederica, as she stopped at her mother's door, “now for the forward officiousness of Miss Lucy Elbany!—Little does she suspect how thoroughly all her arts are thrown away upon my brother; or how differently he estimates the modest simplicity of the heiress of Waddlestone House, and the bold glaring displays of Lady Launceston's companion.”

CHAPTER VII.

Priuli is———a Senator!

VENICE PRESERVED.

SIR BROOKE RAWLEIGH and Mr. Lexley were so unfortunate as to belong to different clubs; and the private residence of the latter was therefore selected as the scene of their negotiations. It is not to be supposed that wholesale and retail dealer in Parliament could have fixed his domicile in any other parish than that of St. Margaret, Westminster; and Sir Brooke accordingly found himself driven to the entrance of a paved court,—an old-fashioned cul-de-sac whose heavy architraves of carved wood-work, narrow windows,

and ostensible roofing of red tile, formed a melancholy memento of the domestic architecture in vogue during the early days of the Hanoverian succession. A peep into the Birdcage-walk, at the peril of dislocation,—and he unceasing carillon of St. Margaret's chimes, formed the sole enlivenment of this dingy senatorial retreat.

A mysterious-looking, middle-aged man, with speckled stockings, powdered hair, and a slight hint of a pig-tail,—who might have been indiscriminately taken for a butler, a clerk, or a secretary,—circumspectly ushered the expected guest into his master's study; with a whispered assurance that Mr. Lexley would shortly make his appearance, having probably been detained at the House; and Sir Brooke, as he gazed around the uninviting chamber, could not but feel that he should be very unwilling to adopt the habits of life of this active servant of the country, in assuming a similar weight of parliamentary responsibility. He examined the tall, dark, spider-legged mahogany writing-table,—spotted with much ink, and indented

with severe penmanship;—the unsightly book-cases filled with vellum-bound folios and buff-leather quartos,—(REPORTS, from Vol. I. to Vol. DXXVIII.,)—and a ragged regiment of loose and unconnected pamphlets;—the chimney-piece graced with two dusty glass girandoles and a museum of printed and wafered circulars, addressed by divers clerkly hands to “John Lexley, Esq., M. P.,”—till his mind involuntarily reverted to his snug library at Rawleighford, Morel-and-Seddouized into the utmost refinement of literary ease, and musky with Russia leather!—its scattered memoranda collected under the paper-weights of Vulliamy’s choicest bronze,—and its artificial light distributed by reading-lamps and shaded candles, such as might have assisted Methuselah or old Parr to decipher a diamond edition without spectacles!

After the miserable solitude of a quarter of an hour, passed in a retreat presenting few extraneous attractions to divert the attention of its owner from the dry details to which he saw fit to devote his existence, a hurried rap an-

nounced Mr. Lexley's return; and having accosted his punctual guest with an incoherent explanation touching the lateness of the division,—the harassed member alluded to the necessity of washing those hands, the cleanliness of which had been so much lauded by Sir Brooke to Frederica, and rushed up the creaking stairs in his usual flurry of superfluous activity.

Rawleigh, who was now growing hungry and fractious, was right glad when at length he found himself seated opposite to his host at the dinner-table; with a tureen of very diaphanous mock-turtle, and a dish of flaccid salmon smothered in horse-radish and surrounded by some smelts of the consistency of cuttle-fish, standing between them. As soon as he had in some degree appeased his appetite with these uninviting provisions,—which Mr. Lexley announced to be “bachelor's fare,” or “pot luck,” or some other apologetic designation of a filthy dinner,—Sir Brooke, on casting his eyes around him, perceived that a well stored dumb-waiter was placed near his host, and another within his

own reach; and that no sooner had the mysterious butler placed upon the board two bottles of sherry, a saddle of rancid mutton, a hay-cock of mashed potatoes, and a tepid salad, than he withdrew from attendance;—closing the door as charily after him as if either his master, or his master's guest, were labouring under a concussion of the brain. It was evident that he was familiarly trained to the business-like privacy of Mr. Lexley's confidential dinners.

“And now, my dear Sir, *we are alone!*” said Lexley, in an opening phrase; twisting, as he spoke his long throat over his shoulder, like that of an ill-trussed ptarmigan, to ascertain that his cup-bearer had left the room. Unconsciously the awe-struck baronet followed his scrutinizing glance, and began to feel that there was something inexpressibly awful in all these mysterious preparations for secrecy. Nothing was wanting but Miss Kelly, to render the scene a perfect melodrama!

It is to be hoped that the courteous reader of these memoirs, has formed no expectation of

hearing *what* it was that Mr. Lexley thought fit to utter, when he found himself "*alone*" with his friend Sir Brooke and the two dumb-waiters. The mysteries of Isis are not more rigidly sacred in our sight, than those occasionally transacted in the parish of St. Margaret; and if the process which sufficed to render our estimable Rawleigh sole representative of the respectable borough of Martwich should ever chance to be betrayed to posterity, so indiscreet a revelation shall never be traced to our pages. We prefer adjourning from Mr. Lexley's second course to the dinner in Charles-street.

Already predisposed against the claims and encroachments of Miss Elbany, Lady Rawleigh felt extremely indignant on entering her mother's crowded drawing-room, to observe Lord Launceston hanging over her chair; and devoting to the Companion that species of distinguishing incense which he had no longer any right to offer except upon the altar at Kensington Gore. If any excuse could be made for his levity, it might have been assuredly found in the surpassing loveliness of the

object of his infidelity; Frederica, who had never before beheld her with the advantages of evening dress, was astonished by the perfect symmetry of Lucy's commanding figure, and by the graceful turn of her head and shoulders. But her attention was not long permitted to rest on details so captivating and so fraught with vexation to herself. Lady Olivia Tadcaster was now announced, bearing upon one arm a steel-embroidered orange-coloured velvet reticule emulating the dimensions of a night-bag, and gleaming with the superficial splendours of the Palace Royal;—and upon the other, an elegant looking little woman, rather over-dressed, whom she eagerly presented to the attentions of her niece, as her friend Mrs. Woodington.

Lady Rawleigh instantly recognised in the sparkling miniature before her,—in which a few of the defeatures of time were varnished over by the hand of a skilful artist,—a very rich widow who had long been the object of Lady Oliver's matrimonial manœuvres in favour of her nephew; and Frederica could not help regret-

ting, as she gazed upon the elaboration of Mrs. Woodington's toilet,—the waving of her feathers,—the profusion of her trinkets,—and the intricate precision of the plaiting of her *béret* sleeves,—that so much labour was lavished on an ingrate. It was indeed a matter of very little surprise to her that Lord Launceston should prefer the graceful and girlish simplicity of his Leonora to the artificial and *apprêté* ornateness of the showy little widow of Woodington Park ; who was notoriously on the look out for an exchange between a poor coronet, and her liberal jointure. But she felt that her brother would have been far more becomingly employed in doing the honours of his mother's house to his mother's guests, than in listening entranced to the “persuasive words and more persuasive sighs” of Miss Lucy Elbany.

Her own attention, however, was soon monopolized by the assiduities of Sir Robert Morse ; who appeared as much delighted to welcome Lady Rawleigh back to her former haunts, as if he had never aspired to the smiles

of Miss Rawdon ;—as anxious to assume the tone of the favoured friend, as if he had never found himself a disappointed suitor.—Lord Launceston was compelled to do the honours of the table to an old card-playing Countess Ronthorst, and an ancient Lady Lavinia Lisle (a spinster, whose matrimonial engagements had been ruptured by the loss of her lover in the first American war) ; his glances straying ever and anon towards the fine contour of Lucy Elbany's head, which turned towards himself only the chignon of its luxuriant raven hair, and towards her neighbour, Sir Mark Milman the lustre of its countenance ;—while Colonel Rhyse, who would willingly have profited by his position on the left of the Companion to divert himself with the liveliness of her sallies, and the exquisite art with which she contrived to call forth and illustrate the absurdities of Sir Mark, found himself obliged to listen to the nimini-pimini, underbred, officious nothings of little Mrs. Woodington, which he knew were bestowed upon him solely in honour of his Pyladeship with their noble host. The

grimacing widow was far too accurately aware of the value of herself and her jointure, to dream of throwing away her attentions, on any other grounds, upon a mere Colonel in the Guards ; fourth son to a paltry Irish earl,—the list of whose offspring occupied a whole page in the peerage.

The only person of the party posted to her entire satisfaction, was poor Lady Launceston ; who enjoyed the consciousness of a large Japan screen between herself and the windows, of a chauffrette at her feet, and a fat comfortable old dowager lord on each side, ready to talk to her of the last news of the last century, in tones which would not have drowned the morning hymn of an humble bee. Unless with Dr. Jenner on her right hand, and Sir Henry Halford or her quotidian apothecary, on her left, she could not have eaten her boiled chicken, and sipped her toast and water in a more gratifying neighbourhood ; while the prominent, dictatorial Lady Olivia, like a personification of the imperative mood, was very aptly stationed between the preterpluperfect politeness of the obsolete

Lord Twadell, and the subjunctive appendix of Mr. Broughley's modern enlightenment.

Mr. Broughley was a learned pundit and travelled man;—had seen not only “the Louvre”—(which he appeared to consider as cockneyfied a monument as Aldgate pump)—but the domes of Mecca, and the senate-house of Washington;—had assisted at a storthing at Drontheim—a diet at Pesth;—palavered with the dog-ribbed Indians,—and sât face to face with the mummy of Möops, by the light of one of Davy's safety-lamps, in the Great Pyramid. This active member—not of society—but of all the societies of modern Europe, was one of the few persons to whom Lady Olivia Tadcaster bowed submissive, as pre-eminent above her omni-motive self.

She had originally made his acquaintance in shooting the falls of the Lahn, on her return from the Taunus mountains, where she had been passing the summer, in order to drink Seltzer water fresh from the rock; and had since intersected his orbit upon her travels,—once in the cabinet of the Japanese Palace at

Dresden, and once in that of the celebrated restaurateur where the legs of geese are candied in sugar, at Toulouse. He was now recently returned from an Italian tour; and it was astonishing how many dear old friends—Romagnese Princes, Signori Abbati, learned librarians,—Arcadian academicians, blue professors, purple Eminences, ruined temples, ruined *roués*, captains of banditti, and captains of the papal guard, she found occasion to render the objects of her inquiries. Like the French Marquis, who exclaimed with affectionate recognition, in some royal library, “*Ah! mon cher Cicéron!—c’est le même que Marc-Tulle!*”—her ladyship inquired how the poor dear old Coliseum had stood the winter,—and whether the Palazzo Aldobrandini was likely to get rid of its *mal’aria!*—

“Is there any truth, Milman,” inquired Sir Robert Morse of Sir Mark, in the pause of his devotion to Lady Rawleigh, “in the report that Rousford gives up the hounds?”

“Mere illnature, Sir—mere illnature.”

“ But they say his health will not allow him to stand another season.”

“ Scandal, Sir Robert, scandal!—one of the idle reports of the day.”

“ I trust it may be so; but I can perceive nothing calumnious in saying that Mr. Rousford is consumptive.”

“ What business has the public with any man's health?—What right have people to feel Mr. Rousford's pulse?—I say, Sir, that all domestic privacy is over in this country!—no individual can put on his nightcap and die in peace, but his last moments are to be discussed, and his medicaments canvassed just as if he was public property. It is an outrage to the liberty of the subject that we can neither share our roast-mutton with a friend, nor have a headach when it suits us, but our motives for the measure, Sir, are to be talked about, and written about, and falsified for nefarious purposes. Half the mischief of modern society is done by this sort of invasion of private life, and idle discussion of our affairs.”

"Because you see," said Sir Robert, who—never listening to long sentences of any description, and perceiving that Sir Mark had set in for a prose, had wisely occupied the interval with a glass of hock, and with the task of helping himself to a second *filet de caneton*, "if Rousford has *really* made up his mind to resign the hounds, he owes it to the county to give us a fair chance for the new appointment. The election cannot be decided in a day."

Lady Rawleigh, whose notions of electioneering were just then confined to the vacancy at Martwich and the pretensions of Sir Brooke, somewhat startled her neighbour by inquiring whether he had any interest in that quarter; but while Sir Robert Morse, who considered the interests of the chase as sacred as Sir Mark Milman appeared to regard the catarrhs and tea and toast of private life, was attempting to explain to her that *he* was an old Meltonian,—incapable of seceding from his party even to be Premier of the Quorn, or the Pytchley, her ear was struck by the name of her cousin Lady

Mary Trevelyan, uttered in the dry nasal twang of Mr. Broughley.

“Then you did not see my niece during your stay at Rome?”—Lady Olivia was inquiring.

“Lord Trevelyan was at his villa at Vico-Varo during the whole period of my visit; and your ladyship will admit that the attractions of the eternal city do not allow so much force to the claims of friendship, as will sanction the sacrifice of a morning to a country visit.”

“A morning?—a mere three hours’ drive!—I recollect the first time I visited Horace’s Villa, I took the *Archigymnasium della Sapienza* on my way; and ran through the gallery of the Palazzo Ruspoli on my return.”—

“Persons of inquiring minds,” said Broughley, with the downcast lids of ‘pride which apes humility,’ “cannot allow themselves to be deluded with such cursory impressions as may content the superficial investigations of the female, the sciolist, and the tyro.”

Now there was nothing so revolting to the feelings of Lady Olivia Tadcaster as to be termed

even, inferentially "*a female*",—a name she estimated as only worthy to designate a dairy-maid, a milliner's apprentice, or the gentler sex of the cynocephalous species;—she was willing at all times to take her stand in any lists for the equality of the sexes, and the prerogative of the petticoat, which she considered disparaged by such contemptuous mention. On the present occasion, her ladyship contented herself with a retort *un-courteous*.

"Well, I must own I wish you *had* extended your superficial observations to the beauty of my niece. Although Lady Mary Trevelyan may not make so imposing a head for one of the chapters of your tour as some pipkin from Pompeii, or gridiron from Girgenti, yet the attractions of her own are described as worthy the notice of all eyes less erudite than those of an F.A.S. One of the *Trecentisti* has written three hundred and sixty-five sonnets in her honour; and Ranzikoff, Thorwaldsen's favourite scholar, took a model of her countenance for that of the mother of the Maccabees in his celebrated group."

“ Indeed ! Have I your ladyship’s permission to record those circumstances in my Essay upon the ‘ Progress of Art in Modern Rome ? ’ I am under an engagement to offer copies to the Pope, and several *Illustrissimi* ; and I am anxious that no important local anecdote should be omitted.”

“ I will write and ask my brother’s leave ; Prince Culminato sets off for Naples next week, and will think himself fortunate to be made the bearer of a letter which may serve as his credentials to Vico-Varo.”

“ Under your ladyship’s correction,” said the Universal Traveller, “ I fear that such a mission would prove a severe disappointment to our young friend Prince Culminato. The other day, on my return through Munich, I perceived Lord Trevelyan’s courier at the gate of the Schwarze Adler ;—I understood his lordship to be on a visit at Tegernsee.”

“ Very strange !—very extraordinary ! ” cried Lady Olivia, pushing away an untouched plate of *fromage plombière*. “ Lady Launceston, my dear, when did you hear from Trevelyan ?—Mr.

Broughley persists that he saw him the other day in Bavaria ;—as if it were a possible thing for my brother to breathe on the wrong side of the Alps !”

“ Ah ! you are but imperfectly aware, my dear sister, of the advantage Trevelyan has derived from that little prescription of Sir Antony’s which I forwarded to him last year. Indeed I have very little doubt that if he would consent to confine himself to the regimen of biscuit-powder and goat’s whey, he might get through a winter at Trevelyan Castle without much difficulty.”

“ Between ourselves, the only reason his health is so much better in Italy,” murmured Lady Olivia to Broughley, “ is from being there beyond the reach of my sister Launceston’s nostrums and charlatanism. But what was the date of your last letter, Sophy ?”

“ I declare I have forgotten !—I think it must have been Parma ; for I remember feeling very apprehensive he might be tempted to try that odious indigestive cheese ; and I know I received it somewhere about March—

for it was at the time my eyes were suffering their annual agonies from the east wind. 'Miss Elbany, my dear, when *did* I hear last from my brother Trevelyan?'

"I read you a letter from his lordship soon after my arrival,—and I have been with your ladyship six weeks," answered the companion, who instantly returned to her persiflage with Sir Mark Milman;—while Frederica mentally echoed—"Six weeks!—*only* six weeks, and mamma already calls her 'my dear!'—reading all the family correspondence, too—including no doubt mine and my brother's. I shall certainly write and give my cousin Mary a hint."

"A very singular person that Lady Mary Trevelyan!" said Mrs. Woodington mincingly, but loud enough to be heard by Lord Launceston; who she was aware had been united in his childhood, by a sort of tacit betrothment, to his wealthy cousin.

"Indeed!" cried his lordship, obedient to the spur. "In what way?—is she blue—or pink—or evangelical?—a flirt, a saint, or a *précieuse*?"

“Every thing by turns,—and nothing long,” said Broughley, pedantically.

“We will not be so severe as to pronounce her either saint or flirt,” said Mrs. Woodington, charmed to have attracted his lordship’s attention to her own radiant little person. “But when I was at Rome two winters ago, nothing was talked of but the feats of Lady Mary Trevelyan;—her exploring expeditions in Apulia, where the whole party remained on horseback from sunrise to sunset;—and her cruises in her own yacht among the Greck islands.”

“I conclude my cousin is fond of riding and sailing,—no uncommon taste!” said Frederica, dryly.

“Oh! certainly,” said Mrs. Woodington, in a deprecating tone, “certainly!—I am far from wishing to cast any imputation on Lady Mary;—only it *was* considered to argue very unusual—*courage*—on the part of a young and beautiful woman, to defend her father, pistol in hand, when they were surrounded by banditti among the ruins of Pæstum; and to command

the manœuvres of her yacht when they were chased by an Algerine at Lepanto."

"Admirable courage, indeed!" said Frederica, warming in defence of her cousin. "Courage, both moral and physical."

"What a horrid Amazon," observed Miss Elbany, sneeringly, to Colonel Rhyse; "worse than the maid of Saragossa."

"A pretty prospect for poor Launceston!" answered the colonel, in the same confidential undertone. "When he breaks off his engagement with this ferocious beauty,—as he certainly will,—she will probably tell him to name his place and weapons, and bring him to book for his desertion."

"But do you think Lord Launceston *will* break off the engagement?" said the artful Companion, while a glance of triumph irradiated her large dark eyes.

"*Ça dépend!*" observed Colonel Rhyse, in a voice both lower and more significant;—so significant, indeed, that it brought a deep blush to the cheeks of the designing Miss Elbany.

"There certainly were many strange stories concerning Lady Mary Trevelyan floating in society at Rome last winter," observed Broughley, with a tone of authentication.

"Lies!—I will answer for it!" cried Sir Mark Milman. "*All the stories which float in society are lies:—scum always rises to the surface.*"

"As for instance," continued the traveller, without noticing the indignant vehemence of the worthy country-gentleman opposite, "the epigrams which made their appearance last year, in the hands of Pasquin and Marforio, were traced by their witty causticity to the invention of Lord Trevelyan's daughter. It was even ~~sum~~ surmised that his holiness had seen fit to speak to the Hanoverian ambassador on the subject."

"Lies again!" said Sir Mark, angrily. "The pope knows better than to provoke the British parliament by an insult offered to a British peer, through the means of such a piece of gilt gingerbread as a Hanoverian resident. The

epigrams were doubtless the production of some notary's clerk of the apostolic chamber."

"I can assure you, Sir Mark, that suspicion pointed very decidedly at Lady Mary."

"Suspicion, Sir, is a dirty cur,—and makes many a false point."

"The position of my cousin Mary," said Frederica, with feeling and spirit, "is one which ought to incline the world very indulgently towards her;—she lost her mother during her infancy,—and has ever since been the spoiled child and constant companion of a father, who is not only a decided humourist, but sufficiently independent to gratify all her whims and fancies, and his own. Lady Mary is young, beautiful, brilliantly accomplished, flattered, followed, and laughed at."

"Pardon me! Lady Rawleigh, not *laughed* at!" said Mrs. Woodington.

"Wept over, then, by the hypocritical!"

"My dear Fred.! you are quite eloquent!" cried Lord Launceston, greatly amused by her vehement defence of a cousin whom she had

not seen for fifteen years. "You appear inclined to fight under Mary Trevelyan's banners."

"I should have no fear of enlisting, from any thing I have yet heard concerning her; I know my cousin, from good authority, to be a fine generous creature, incapable of a bad action; and if a little headstrong, and prodigiously ignorant or contemptuous of the usages of the world, I have no doubt she will find abundance of friends eager to forgive such sins, in favour of ten thousand a-year, and the handsomest face in Europe."

"Hear, hear!" cried Lord Launceston, secretly nettled by the ardour with which his sister embraced the cause of a relative, to whom he was conscious of having behaved unhandsomely. Even before his acquaintance with Leonora, his lordship had secretly decided against the fulfilment of an engagement formed by his parents in his infancy without his concurrence; and his projected marriage with Miss Waddlestone now appeared to render an explanation of his intentions more peremptory than ever.

“It is a melancholy thing,” said Countess Ronthorst, dropping little dice of pine-apple into a glass of old Madeira, “when young women of Lady Mary’s rank-in life forget what is due to themselves and their families;—don’t you think so, Lord Launceston?”

“Perhaps,” observed Lady Lavinia Lisle, in a querimonious voice, “perhaps this misguided young creature may be suffering from some disappointment of the affections;—don’t you think so, Lord Launceston?” And without being at all aware of the origin of the confusion now visible in his countenance, she cast a look of timid sensibility on her own skinny forefinger;—saddled with a lozenge-shaped ring of the size of a tombstone, behind whose glass was braided a lock of hair from the military queue of the martyred hero of the American war; with a flourishing E. B. in diamond sparks, forming the obituary record of Captain Edward Boddington—the beloved victim of Bunker’s Hill!

“*Changeons d’entretien*,” whispered Frederica to her neighbour, Sir Robert Morse; “the

character of poor Lady Mary has been quite sufficiently anatomized."

Now Sir Robert possessed only one intellectual treasury on which he could draw at sight—the stables!—He was one of that numerous class of well-educated Englishmen who devote their whole existence to an inferior animal;—and although too gentlemanly in his habits to emulate the jargon and costume by which certain noble youths assimilate themselves with their own jockeys, a horse was at all times the thing uppermost in his thoughts.

"You don't ride this year, Lady Rawleigh?" said he, on the spur of the moment. "I have not seen you in the park once this season."

"I left my horse in Warwickshire, and Sir Brooke has not one which would carry a lady."

"Have you nothing fit for Lady Rawleigh?" inquired Sir Robert of Lord Launceston.

"I am sorry to say I have nothing fit for any one. My stud is at a miserably low ebb," said his Lordship. "I sold off every thing last

summer except my hunters. But Fred., why did you not bring up your own mare?—she suits you perfectly.”

“ Yes ! and she suited you so perfectly to go to cover when you were at Rawleighford, that old John would not hear of my bringing her to town ; poor Jessy has been turned out to recruit.”

“ What have you done with that half-bred Arabian which Lady Rawleigh used sometimes to ride before her marriage ? ” persisted Sir Robert to his friend. “ *That* was the most complete thing for a lady I ever saw.”

“ Oh ! I wish I had never parted with him,” said Lord Launceston. “ He went one black morning, in the general turn out, to Tattersall’s. —By the way, Mrs. Woodington, I think I saw you riding Mameluke the other morning ? ”

“ It was lent me by my friend, Admiral Manningtree,” replied the widow, delighted to be noticed by Lord Launceston, even on account of her horse. “ He wishes to part with it, as being too slight to carry *his* weight ; and I shall

be only too happy to wave my claims in favour of Lady Rawleigh, should you wish to make the purchase."

"How say you, Frederica,—if I buy Mameluke, will you ride him again?"

"Certainly not;—he would be a very useless horse to you: and you are not well provided for yourself just now."

"Well, then, since you are so punctilious, shall I recommend him to Rawleigh?"

"Still less!—Sir Brooke purchased Jessy for me only last autumn."

"One would think that matrimony had caused a total revolution in your taste," observed Sir Robert Morse, "so fond as you always were of riding!"

"Fred. used to be as determined a centauress as Lady Mary Trevelyan," observed her brother; "and I really never saw the ride so full as it is this year;—it is the only place for meeting every body."

"Who are those handsome girls on white ponies with whom I met Sir Brooke Rawleigh

yesterday morning?" inquired Sir Mark Milman of Frederica.

"I really do not know—I have not been in the park this year."

"By Jove, I do believe Rawleigh was cunning enough to put that whim about Jessy into old John's head," said Lord Launceston, laughing, "in order that he may keep the park to himself; for positively she was not out with me half-a-dozen times, and is strong enough for twice my weight."

"Then by all means evade being a dupe by countermining the plot," whispered Sir Robert to Frederica. "Give your sanction to Launceston to make Mameluke his own again;—believe me, nothing avails to counterbalance the injurious effects of a London life like a canter every morning."

"Or if you are too proud to ride your brother's horse, my dear niece," said Lady Olivia Tadcaster, delighted at the notion of *a deal* of any kind, "what can you do better with that little bag of sovereigns I found yesterday morning on

your dressing-table, than indulge in a favourite recreation?"

Now this little bag of sovereigns happened to contain the destined price of the marble fountain which was yet incomplete; but Frederica knew she had three hundred pounds of her *pin money* lying untouched in the hands of Mr. Ruggs, of which only one was bespoken for the Opera; and began to reflect that it would be impossible to appropriate it more to her personal satisfaction than in the purchase of her favourite horse. Besides, she had very little doubt that the handsome girls on the white ponies were the Mapleberrys, under the chaperonage of the odious Lady Lotus.

"What did Admiral Manningtree ask?" inquired Lady Olivia of her friend.

"A hundred guineas."

"And I originally bought him for two hundred and fifty!" exclaimed Lord Launceston.

"I suspect," said the managing little Mrs. Woodington, who with all her finery was not superior to the feminine spirit of a bargain, "I suspect the admiral would be glad to part with

him for eighty. It is his daughter's favourite horse; and as she is going abroad to die at Nice and can have no further occasion for it, it will only be an incumbrance to the admiral. I dare say he will let it go cheap."

"Poor Miss Manningtree!" sighed Lady Lavinia Lisle—"she has never got over that disappointment about Lord Putney. She is in a deep decline."

"Unless she has infected Mameluke, *that* is not *our* affair," said Sir Robert Morse, as the ladies rose to leave the dining-room, and he had the happiness of diving under the table for Lady Rawleigh's handkerchief. "Well!—does your ladyship authorize Launceston to make the purchase?"

"Inquire about it for me," said Frederica to her brother, whose attention was riveted on the figure of Lucy Elbany drawing on her gloves.

"I will let you know to morrow," was his vague reply, as his sister turned into the hall.

CHAPTER VIII.

Thereby so fearlesse and so fell he grew,
That his own wyfe and mistress of his guise
Did often tremble at his horrid view.

WHEN Frederica returned to Bruton-street, where she found her husband extended upon the sofa in all the martyrdom of indigestion proceeding from the crudities of Mr. Lexley's feast, she had so much to relate touching the diverting little artifices of Mrs. Woodington, and the blindness of her mother to Miss Elbany's designs on the thoughtless Launceston, that her own upon Admiral Manningtree's stables were quite forgotten. She had to complain that, with a very slight preface of

apology to herself, her brother had insisted on sending to Bruton-street for her harp, in order that the Companion might indulge her own vanity and his lordship's request, by an exhibition of her musical talents.

"I wish Martin had mentioned it to me when I came in," said Sir Brooke, starting from his recumbent position.

"Oh! all interference would then have been useless; Miss Lucy had given us half-a-dozen sonatas before eleven o'clock."

"Of course;—but if I had known there was to be music, I would have put on my hat again, and looked in at your mother's. Conceiving there would be nothing better than Lady Olivia and the whist-table, I laid myself down here, and went to sleep till I heard the carriage stop."

"Your wife and the rest of the party in Charles-street are much obliged to you."

"And how does Miss Elbany play?—like a country Miss, I suppose, with more vehemence than measure!—But she must make a splendid figure at the harp?"

“Very much like that colossal statue of Melpomene, whose head used to reach the rafters in the King’s-mews!—But I *must* do her the justice, to say that I never heard a more accomplished musician, nor beheld such complete mastery of the instrument combined with so much exquisite musical feeling;—the whole thing was perfection.”

“Do let your harp remain in Charles-street, Frederica!—I should like of all things to hear her,” said Sir Brooke, deceived by the candour of his wife into forgetting her little previous jealous pique against her mother’s companion. “Whenever you want to practise, it will be just as easy for you to play there as at home, —it will remind you of old times.”

“I have not the least desire to expose my incapacity by contrasting my performances with those of Miss Elbany, who was doubtless educated for a public performer; but I certainly would comply with your request in that lady’s favour, were I not alive to the danger of increasing her attractions in my brother’s eyes.”

“What can be the harm of making his mornings in Charles-street pass a little more agreeably?—Now *you* are gone, he must find his visits to his mother hang very heavily on his hands; and yet you know Lady Launceston would be very much mortified to find their duration curtailed.”

“Perhaps so;—but I have reason to believe that William is under an engagement in another quarter, which renders his attentions to Miss Elbany rather offensive than perilous to himself; in short, his conduct towards her argues a degree of heartless levity, which ought to find some more becoming spot for its indulgence than my mother’s roof.”

“My pretty little moralist,—my dear magnanimous Reformer!” cried Sir Brooke, in a tone of gaiety which betrayed the lingering effects of the second bottle of Mr. Lexley’s rosy sherry, “you shall have it exactly as you please!—You shall send back the carriage for the harp this very moment, if it suit you; and as soon as I am in the House, you shall write me an oratorical burst of indig-

nation respecting military punishments, or the slave trade.—These little severities sit so becomingly on your lips !”

But on the morrow, it became the turn of Rawleigh to play the censor. Before Frederica had finished her bantam’s egg, Sir Brooke quitted the breakfast-table to communicate, in lengthy epistle to his factotum, the approaching change in his situation ; trusting that the prospect of receiving his future letters post-free, might blind that narrow calculator to the painful necessity of booking up to an immediate and considerable amount. But just as he had entangled himself in the middle of a very long and inconclusive sentence,—having as many limbs as Briareus which the baronet was vainly attempting to fetter by the manacle of a full stop,—the sound of another species of full stop in the street below startled him from the writing-table ; when, looking from the window, he perceived Lord Launceston resigning the rein of a showy Arabian horse, from which he had just dismounted, to a footman holding a breakfast napkin in his

hand; and while his brother-in-law flew up stairs, Sir Brooke was chafing with all the irritation of equestrian sympathy, on beholding Mr. Thomas jerking the snaffle in its delicate mouth as if he were handling a jack-chain.

“My dear fellow!” cried he, as Lord Launceston burst into the room, “what can tempt you to confide that fine horse to a man—”

“Who passes his days in caning a clothes-horse?—Because it is not *mine*. Mameluke is the property of your lady wife;—so away with your eggshell, Fred., and write me a draft for eighty pounds upon your Mr. Ruggs or Muggs, or whatever his name may be, in favour of Admiral Manningtree. I have not a moment—make haste—I must ride him round to your stables, or we shall have Thomas putting his head in the dry-toast rack.”

“What is all this?” said Sir Brooke, as Frederica calmly took his Bramah’s stick from his hands to comply with her brother’s invitation. “You surely do not mean that Lady Rawleigh has bought that horse?”

“No, I bought him,—but Fred. pays for him. She was afflicted with a fit of heroism last night, and by way of acquainting the party in Charles-street with the disordered state of my finances, refused me the pleasure of purchasing Mameluke on my own account for her service.”

“Why *should* you encumber yourself with a horse which must be perfectly useless to you?” said Frederica, proceeding to write her order on Mr. Ruggs, without any suspicion of her husband’s surprise and vexation at a measure, which he conceived to have been purposely effected without his knowledge.

“By Heavens!—I have just found it out!” cried Lord Launceston, flourishing his whip in a manner extremely perilous to the tables of Dresden china scattered about the room. “You prevented me from making Mameluke my own, fearing I might sometimes lend him to Miss Elbany, and drive the whole park demented by the sight of her splendid figure in a habit!—For shame, Fred., for shame!—how did you know

that I was not anxious to make the purchase for the sake of my own Leonora?"

"I was anxious only to prevent your throwing away money for my sake," replied his sister, quietly tendering him the cheque. "And now go and settle with the Admiral, and place poor dear Mameluke under the care of Rawleigh's groom;—I wonder what old John will say to him?"—

"That is more," thought Sir Brooke, "than she appears to have wondered concerning her husband; who is, however, somewhat more interested in the affair."

"Why should you not ride *to-day*?" said Lord Launceston returning from the door, and eager to conduce to his sister's amusement."

"*Shall* we ride to-day, Rawleigh?" said Frederica. "It promises to be very fine."

"I shall be engaged with Mr. Lexley all the afternoon," replied Sir Brooke coldly.

"Then I will take care of you," cried her brother,—“provided you do not share in the taste of the Miss Mapleberrys for galloping

about the park. I shall be back from Kensington Gore by four o'clock; shall I tell John to bring Mameluke round at that hour?"—

"Pray do!" said Lady Rawleigh, "I shall be glad to assure myself by experience, that he has lost nothing of his paces in poor Miss Manningtree's possession."

Lord Launceston was off in a minute; and Frederica perceiving that her husband had eagerly returned to his writing, forbore to interrupt him by her explanations; but took up "The Undying One," from the sofa, and ran over those exquisite lines—

To look upon the fairy one who stands
Before you with her young hair's shining bands,
And rosy lips half parted; and to muse
Not on the features which you now peruse,
Not on the blushing bride, but look beyond
Unto the angel wife—nor feel less fond;—
To keep thee but to one—and let that one
Be to thy home what warmth is to the sun;
And fondly, firmly, cling to her, nor fear
The fading touch of each declining year;
This is true love—when it hath found a rest
In the deep home of manhood's faithful breast.

In this task she was interrupted by the audible energy of Sir Brooke's penmanship!

It appeared to her ears that he was unlucky in sputtering and splitting pens more frequently than she had ever found herself in all her experience of Bramah's defects; but it never occurred to her that he was in a passion. In about a quarter of an hour, however, he jumped up and rang the bell for a candle to seal his letter.—There are few better criterions of the state of a man's temper, than his mode of ringing the bell;—particularly in a ready furnished house, where they are seldom hung on scientific principles.—

Frederica, aware of the delinquencies of the bell-wire, and consequently unsuspecting of her own share in the peal which now rattled in her ears, thought it but an act of justice to Thomas, the bell-rope, and her husband, to remind him that he would find a taper and phosphoric matches on her writing-table; and Sir Brooke, who was firmly persuaded that his irritation had not escaped her attention, regarded this species of reproof only as an aggravation of her offence. He was obliged however to profit by the suggestion, and inform Thomas, on his panting arrival,

that "nothing was wanted;" and while the footman retreated, congratulating himself that the house was not on fire, nor his lady in a fainting fit, a match whizzed in the or-moulu vase, the pungent fumes of the phosphorus tingled the nose of the unlucky Rawleigh, and the little taper started into light!

A still more perplexing trial awaits an angry man in sealing a letter!—Absent and tremulous, he is sure to burn his fingers;—and this is exactly what chanced to Sir Brooke. The pain was exquisite; and elicited so vivacious an apostrophe to the sealing-wax, that Frederica laid down her book with amazement.

"My dear Rawleigh, have you burnt yourself?" she inquired with startled solicitude.

The reply of Sir Brooke need not be recorded; it was comprehended in that very reprehensible adverb which is reported by Lord Byron to have been the cause of his first conjugal quarrel, as a reply to her ladyship's inquiry—(probably at some moment equally propitious with that of poor Frederica)—"whether she bored him?" Lady Rawleigh, if less

implacably offended, was deeply hurt by so harsh a breach of respect towards herself; but concluding that her husband would apologize when the smart abated, she uttered not a syllable of remonstrance.

It is rather surprising that, being herself endued with that slight touch of jealousy which is inseparable from a quick sensibility, Lady Rawleigh should have remained completely blind to the existence of a similar feeling on the part of her husband. No man could be more purely and affectionately devoted to a woman—to *a wife*—than Sir Brooke to herself. But, unfortunately, he had passed half-a-dozen seasons in London prior to his marriage; where the adventures in which he beheld certain of his young companions engaged, and which had more than once tempted his own steadiness of moral character somewhat out of the perpendicular, perplexed him with a painful conviction of the levity of womankind, which was in fact the origin of his deliberation in tendering his proposals to Miss Rawdon. He had perfect con-

fidence in Frederica ;—he knew Lady Launceston to be a very worthy woman, who had educated her daughter in the strict principles of the old school;—but he did not feel himself the less imperatively bound to preserve the flower thus delicately reared and nurtured from the pollutions of the world. In uniting himself with the fair and gentle Frederica Rawdon, he had uttered a secret vow to secure his wife as far as the conventions of society would admit, from the profanation of libertine approach, and the contagion of frivolous companionship.

It was this very strictness of principle which in the first instance suggested his objections against pin money, as a pernicious ministrant to feminine independence; and which originated his disinclination for the opera-box,—where he saw she must be exposed to the contact of all Mrs. William Erskyne's train of admirers,—nay! perhaps of her own. He knew that she was too lovely not to be courted and followed;—and feared she was too guilelessly unsuspecting, not to give unintentional encouragement to this species of adulation!

But above all, his desire to retain the beauty of his bride for his own adoration, and her society for his own enjoyment, had been the sole cause of Jessy's condemnation to an idle spring in the Rawleighford meadows. Sir Brooke was fully aware that of all the opportunities afforded to flirtation, a side-saddle is the most propitious; that in the hilarity of the open air, the approach to familiarity is dangerously easy; that a thousand things are said, and heard, and smiled at in the publicity of a morning ride, which would be resented in the domestic privacy of home; and recalling to mind the extreme passion of almost every giddy woman of his acquaintance for exhibiting herself on horseback in London, he judged it prudent to give his hint to the old groom.

Now although perfectly satisfied that this hint had never indirectly reached his wife, he could not help persuading himself that Frederica was—or at least should or might have been—suspicious of his peculiar views on the subject; and he was now of opinion that the submissive acquiescence with which she re-

ceived his sentence on her favourite mare, had arisen from a pre-determination to avail herself of the facilities afforded by her *pin money* to add artifice to defiance, and secure her daily exhibition in the park. He conceived himself to have been ungenerously used, both by Lord Launceston and ~~his~~ sister; and this second offence of her financial independence excited such a tumult of vexation in his heart, that the corrosion of the burning sealing-wax applied to his little finger, was by no means necessary to torture forth from his lips the unbecoming adverb already implied.

Lady Rawleigh, meanwhile, was wholly unconscious of the train leading to the mine which had thus abruptly exploded; and the major and the minor of his provocations having been unuttered, the conclusion assumed a most inexplicable tone of violence in her ears. She had as little suspicion that Rawleigh was jealous, as that she was jealous herself; and till his disorder should assume the form of nervous headaches, there appeared no probability that her mind would become further enlightened.

Even when—the monumental blister of his burn having duly made its appearance, and given the sealing-wax and his anger ample leisure to cool,—he deliberately stalked out of the room with Ruggs's letter in his hand;—even when, after a rattling in the stick and umbrella stand in the hall, she heard the street door slammed, manifestly without the intervention of her well-trained and well-practised domestics,—she never for a moment conjectured that herself or her doings had any share in the unwonted distemperature of mood which tempted Sir Brooke, for the first time since her marriage, to quit the house without bidding her good-bye!

“How I hate him to have any intercourse with that pragmatistical Ruggs!” murmured Frederica, patiently resuming her volume. “Men are always out of sorts after a communication with their bailiff, or an investigation of their banker's book. And then he is so **much** interested and occupied with this negotiation with Mr. ^fLexley;—and should it succeed, his time will be so wretchedly engrossed by his parliamentary duties!—

Ah ! I foresee I shall not have half so pleasant a spring as I expected ;—for that impertinent companion in Charles-street will prevent me from consoling myself by passing the time of his absence with mamma !—I dare say Rawleigh is only gone to his club, and did not think it necessary to take leave of me for that half hour ?—But then surely he said something of passing the day with Mr. Lexley ?—So that perhaps he may go round to the stables for his horse, after he has read the newspapers, without coming home at all !—How very provoking !—All the pleasure of my first ride will be lost, unless I see dear Rawleigh for a minute or two before we set off.”

It may be observed, on occasions of disagreement in wedded life, that where a quarrel has not exactly declared itself, or a state of hostility sent forth its gauntlet of defiance, a species of uneasy consciousness forewarns the pacific party that something is wrong. Like the inhabitants of a volcanic region, they hear strange noises in the air, and mysterious sounds in the

earth, unnoticed of every casual passenger, but prophetic of an eruption.

Between the breakfast hour, accordingly, and that appointed for her ride, Lady Rawleigh endured a prolonged martyrdom of suspense ; and it appeared to her as if every creature of her acquaintance had entered into a combination against her peace. A host of early morning visitors seemed to league itself for her torment. Lady Olivia Tadcaster first made her appearance with a large roll in her hand resembling that of a paperhanger ; containing patterns from Besford's of garlands which were to be embroidered on a *couvre pied*, nominally by her ladyship's own hands, but virtually by those of every idle victim she could manage to recruit into the service.—While Frederica was listening with the most anxious attention for her husband's knock,—or, as the street door would probably remain open for the amusement of Lady Olivia's servants, so that he might enter unobserved,—for the creaking of the floor of his dressing-room above,

her indefatigable aunt persisted in rolling and unrolling these crackling papers, the music of which might have served for a shower of hail at a minor theatre!—Unless the person of Sir Brooke had emulated the ponderosity of poor Chuny, there could be no hope that the yielding boards above would produce an echo capable of drowning the united efforts of Lady Olivia's tongue, and Lady Olivia's rattling peals of thunder.

Before her ladyship's choice had been fully decided between the comparative facilities afforded to the needle by the sinuosities of the olive-branch, and the serrated leaves of the fern, Lady Lawford—perceiving by the equipage standing at the door, that Frederica was at home to morning visitors—took the opportunity of bestowing upon her a visitation as long, as tedious, and as unprofitable, as if it had been paid at Rawleighford on a misty morning in November; and whereas in Warwickshire, she never descanted on any but London topics,—fashion, scandal, and dissipation,—in Bruton-street she judged it more

effective to enlarge upon her new dairy, and the spinning prizes and bobbin-lace prizes she had recently instituted in her own village. While she was favouring them with recitals and hints of her beneficent anti-pauperic plans, which would really have talked well in Parliament, and which had only the demerit of being incapable of fulfilment in any country less loosely legislated than Cochin-China, Lady Olivia occasionally interpolated a suggestion of amelioration, borrowed from the experience of her travels;—sometimes from an *ospidaletto* at Ancona,—sometimes from a *Spinn-haus* at Haerlem. These ladies talked and argued, as argumentative ladies are apt to do,—simultaneously; while Frederica had to support the martyrdom of hearing knocks at the door fired off like minute guns,—without venturing such a breach of decorum as to ring and inquire the names of her ceremonious visitors, and deafened by her vociferous companions beyond the power of distinguishing her husband's knock. Dull indeed, must be the feminine ear which does not speedily acquire that auricular instinct!—but alas! *what*

instinct may avail amidst the din of an oil-mill, —or the rhetorical dispute of two female Utilitarians, in the healthy maturity of their lungs!

At length, to her infinite joy, Lady Lawford, with her cheek bleached, and her nose reddened by suppressed anger,—for Lady Olivia had out-talked her, as she would have done O'Kelly's parrot which chattered incessantly for one hundred years,—rose to depart. But no sooner had her carriage driven away, and the victorious mistress of the field, elated by her success, commenced a long diatribe against the folly of Lady Launceston, in forcing the company of Miss Elbany on her guests, than the door burst open; and Frederica, in the sanguine anticipations of her affection, half rose from the sofa, to welcome her husband.—But, alas!—it was only Mrs. William Erskyne who bounded into the room! Seizing Lady Rawleigh by the hand, she cast upon her aunt a glance of contemptuous detestation which would have exterminated any woman of less robust health than Lady Olivia Tadcaster;—who, regarding her niece's

flippant friend as a species of gnat, troublesome in proportion to its insignificance, resolved to avoid the wing and sting of her insect antagonist by a hasty farewell to Frederica.

"And now, my dear," cried Mrs. Erskyne, "now that sempiternal Seniramis in tiffany, your respectable aunt, has taken her departure,—put on your bonnet and come with me, without asking me why or whither.—Do not look so terrified, child!—I will not decoy you to a conjuror's or a dentist's,—although I make you my own in spite of your teeth."

"I am not alarmed," replied Frederica, laughing at her mysterious eagerness; "but believe me I cannot be the victim of your despotism this morning; I ride with Launceston at four o'clock."

"And it is not yet three!—Surely you do not require more than ten minutes for the adjustment of your Calypso?"

"Not five, I should imagine. But I am waiting for Rawleigh."

"To walk with you, arm-in-arm, to the Cosmorama, or Macdonald's statues, like the living

picture of country cousinhood?—Fie! my dear Fred.!—will you never get rid of your odious provincial habits?—You positively deserve to be painted, framed and glazed, and hung up in the parlour of the Rawleigh arms as a pendant to the gentleman in top-boots, pointing out the nest of two turtle-doves to a lady in yellow shoes and a blue veil,—and ticketed with the pleasing title of Domestic Felicity.”

“But will you really bring me back in time for my ride?” said Lady Rawleigh, without considering to what clause of her friend’s argument this disjunctive conjunction attached itself.

“Grant me half an hour, and afterwards I am your slave till midnight;” cried Mrs. Erskyne.

“Je veux donner une heure aux soins de mon empire,
Et le reste du jour tout entier à Zaire.”

Unused to assert her independence, and like most other persons inexperienced in the world peculiarly under the influence of irony, poor

Lady Rawleigh found herself quizzed into the necessity of following her friend into the chariot waiting at the door. She had however the negative consolation of learning from the butler, in butler phrase, as she passed him in the hall, that Sir Brooke had not "been in."

CHAPTER IX.

The connoisseur takes out his glass to pry
Into each picture with a curious eye ;
Turns topsy-turvy my whole composition,
And makes mere portraits all my exhibition.
From various forms, Apelles, Venus drew,
So from the million do I copy you :
“ But still the copy’s so exact,” you say ;—
Alas !—the same thing happens every day !

SAMUEL FOOTE.

LADY RAWLEIGH was too well acquainted with the nature of the trivialities as actuating the incidents of Mrs. Erskyne’s existence, to expect any very important result from her compliance with the request thus peremptorily urged ;—she anticipated the sight of some new vase at Rittener’s, some new ribbon at Harding’s, or some new lithograph at Colnaghi’s, as

the utmost object of their expedition. Nor were her calculations very erroneous.

As they stopped at a private door in Regent-street, Louisa, assuming a smile of mysterious intelligence, exclaimed, "Now you must give me your candid opinion;—remember, I brought you hither for the benefit of your impartial advice!—I have no wish to be flattered, Frederica;—a woman's flattery always sounds to me as hollow as the Thames-tunnel."

Extremely puzzled as to the nature of the occasion which could render flattery distasteful to a little coquette like Louisa, Lady Rawleigh followed her friend into a small apartment; in the centre of which stood an easel covered with a sheet of silver paper.

"You must give me your sincere opinion as to ~~the~~ likeness," cried Mrs. Erskyne. "I have been sitting to Rochard; and to-day we are to decide, with the assistance of your better judgment, on the costume. There!" she exclaimed, drawing the last pin from the sheet, and displaying a half-finished miniature. "*Me voilà—comme deux gouttes d'eau!*"—when lo!

an exquisite likeness of Miss Lucy Elbany burst upon their astonished eyes!—

“How strange!” cried Frederica.

“How provoking!” murmured Mrs. Erskyne.

But in another moment Monsieur Rochard made his appearance, to rescue his property from their inopportune investigation, and to produce the portrait of Louisa from a secret drawer.—With a very clear conscience did Lady Rawleigh assure her friend of the resemblance as well as the exquisite perfection of the performance. It was in fact Mrs. Erskyne herself,—softened by that touch of sentiment so wholly wanting in her own nature, and so seldom wanting in the graceful portraits of Rochard.

After an eager discussion of the comparative merits of a fashionable ball-dress,—of a Vandyke costume,—a Rembrantized pelisse,—an aërial vesture of clouds—and the descriptive attractions of Rebecca, Annot Lyle, Medora, Yarico, a Peri, a Zingari, an Albanian peasant, and a Polish princess,—which left poor Louisa Erskyne doubly perplexed by the multifarious suggestions of her fickle vanity, Frederica ha-

zarded a request for a second glance at the miniature which had occupied the easel on their entrance. But the obliging artist, on an allusion to the subject, became suddenly as mysterious as if he had arrayed himself in the cloudy mantle in which Louisa had been so desirous of enveloping the Iris-like outline of her own portrait.

“*Ah! pardon!*” said Monsieur Rochard, with as decided a tone as politeness would allow, “*mais d’abord c’est impossible. Cette jeune dame tient beaucoup au mystère; elle se fait peindre pour offrir une surprise agréable à quelqu’un de sa famille.*”

“Of my family, rather!” thought Lady Rawleigh.

“But as we do not know the lady,” said ~~Mr~~ Erskyne, who very seldom entered Lady Launceston’s dowager door, and had never seen the Companion,—“we cannot betray her secret. Pray let us look at it again.”

“I do not wonder, Madam, at your eagerness,” said the artist; “for never did so faultless a model present itself to my pencil. But as I

have promised to secure the picture from observation, I am persuaded you will not desire me to betray the confidence reposed in me."

Louisa, who was far more interested in the successful delineation of her own face than in the charms of the Venus de Medicis herself, readily dismissed the subject; and after some further arguments touching her dress and appointment for the following day, took her leave, and performed her promise of conveying Lady Rawleigh back to Bruton-street, whose attention was now completely engrossed by the mystery of Miss Elbany's sitting for her picture at the cost of thirty guineas. That it was destined for Lord Launceston she did not for a moment doubt; and Frederica almost wished she had accepted his offer touching the purchase of Mameluke, when she considered the objects to which he appeared inclined to devote his superfluous cash. The miniature of his mother's beautiful companion could only be valuable in his eyes as a specimen of *virtù*; and his sister naturally adjudged it to be a very

unbecoming addition to the gallery at Marston Park.

On reaching home, her first measure was a repetition of her inquiry to Martin, touching the return of Sir Brooke; in reply to which, she had the vexation of learning that her husband had been at home for a quarter of an hour during her absence.

“ Did he leave any message for me ? ”

“ No, my lady.”

“ Did he inquire for me ? ”

“ No, my lady.”

“ Did he go into the drawing-room, Martin ? ”

“ No, my lady.”

“ Did he say whether he dined at home ? ”

“ No, my lady.”

“ Did he order his horse ? ”

“ No, my lady.”

“ His phaeton ? ”

“ No, my lady.”

But Lady Rawleigh, happening to lift her eyes from the stair-carpet, at this crisis of her cross-examination, perceived that the identical Thomas,

who had so grievously abused the fine mouth of Mameluke during breakfast, was now opening his own to display a row of teeth—resembling a concatenation of milestones—at her expense ; and she was hurrying up stairs to avoid the irritation of witnessing his impertinence, when the Jackanapes, descending from his consequential altitude as a standard footman, vouchsafed to volunteer some further information respecting his master's movements.

“ Sir Brooke went into the library, my lady, to answer a note ; and I mentioned to him that your ladyship was gone out airing with Mrs. William Erskyne.”

“ Did he ask how long I had been gone ?”

“ No, my lady.”

“ Did he inquire whether I had left any message ?”

“ No, my lady.”

“ Did he give no orders then ?”

“ No, my lady.”

“ Nor say any thing ?”

“ Oh ! yes, my lady” —

“What did he tell you?” said Frederica, stopping short on the stairs.

“To shut the door, my lady,” said the footman, smothering a laugh,—with a persuasion that he had succeeded in mystifying his gentle and indulgent mistress. It was well for Mr. Thomas that Lord Launceston, who a few minutes afterwards was at the door assisting Lady Rawleigh to mount her new purchase, had no suspicion of his insolence; or the whip which he placed in her hands might have found a more apposite employment than that of tickling the shoulders of Mameluke.

“Where shall we go?” said Lord Launceston.

“Any where you please,” was Frederica’s listless reply;—and uttered with better faith than usually dictates that very comprehensive answer.

“Hyde Park is full of dust and dandies; and the Regent’s, of exhibitions and east wind.”

“Shall we go and see the Hammersmith bridge?” inquired Lady Rawleigh.

“By all means!” said Lord Launceston, turn-

ing his horse's head in that direction. "Although, as my friend Mrs. Waddlestone elegantly observes, we may chance to be smothered in onions among those detestable market gardens at Battersea."

"I should imagine they were guilty of nothing less refined than strawberries and asparagus at this season of the year; and every now and then one is refreshed along that road by the sight of a staring old red brick villa of King William's time, with a cedar or two in the garden, looking as if it had strayed from Mount Carmel"—

"Or been planted by the hand of Sir Hans Sloane. I like those comfortable suburban retreats; they make one fancy that Orpheus has been striking up his country dances in Hanoversquare,—beguiled its solid square mansions along the Fulham-road,—and left them scattered among plantations of Scotch firs."—

"Your friends the Waddlestones reside somewhere in that neighbourhood?" said Frederica, by way of affording an opening to her brother's confessions.

“Yes!—My father-in-law’s soap manufactory stands on the banks of the Thames somewhere near Battersea,” said his lordship, with the most unembarrassed coolness. “I understand that neither tree nor herbage will grow within an acre of its noxious vapours; and that it is indicted as a parochial nuisance once in six weeks.—A nuisance?—vile affectation!—for my part I shall prefer its unctuous exhalations to the sickly aroma of Delcroix’s, or of Thevenot’s shop. Think, my dear Fred., think how proud you will be when, in washing your fair hands, you detect beneath the intaglio of Windsor-castle on your soap, the names of Waddlestone and Co.;—or perhaps, of Waddlestone, Launceston, and Co.!”—

“How can you jest on such a subject?” cried Frederica, vexed by her brother’s tone of bravado. “Think rather what would have been my father’s feelings, could he have anticipated so degrading a connexion for his only son.”—

“My father used to make an annual speech on the amelioration of the manufacturing classes;—and how can we amend them more satisfac-

torily than by a mutual exchange of our superfluous commodities—rank and wealth? By the way, Fred., I had a narrow escape of being bored into my grave yesterday, by one of Rawleigh's stupid old stiffnecked relations. As I was riding into the Waddlestones' courtyard, I had the good fortune to encounter Mrs. Martha Derenzy's ark upon wheels."

"Does *she* visit those vulgar people?"

"She had been sitting toadying the soap-boiler's wife for two long mortal hours, by way of converting the luncheon at Waddlestone-house into her own early dinner. Yesterday she even brought some poor relation of the family to profit by the opportunity;—some silly prating girl, whose forward airs completely disgusted my poor dear timid Mrs. Waddlestone."

Frederica felt the colour rush into her cheeks; but suspecting that she had been detected by her brother, and that he was trying to provoke her into a betrayal of herself, she quietly rejoined, "Poor Mrs. Martha is not rich, and has a tribe of indigent nieces; we must not be too severe upon her for trying to secure a com-

fortable meal for one of them.—Do *you* often dine at Waddlestone-house ?”—

“ Not so frequently, perhaps, as I ought, under all the circumstances. When I first came to town, I was there every day; but since I discovered metal more attractive in Charles-street ”—

“ Bronze more Corinthian, you might say ! ”—

“ I have somewhat neglected the *melting* charms of my Leonora.”

“ An honourable alternative certainly, between a tradesman's daughter and my mother's Companion ! Oh ! Launceston—Launceston !—I thought you had better judgment.”

“ Between the *beaux yeux* of the one, and the *beaux yeux de la cassette* of the other, my heart—”

“ Pray do not profane your heart by mention in such a case ! By the way, as Miss Leonora is so experienced an artist, and Miss Lucy so admirable a model, I wonder you have not brought them together for the love of the arts ?”

“ A good hint, Frederica !—I will certainly

persuade my mother to bring down Miss Elbany to Marston, and Leonora shall beguile the honeymoon, by taking her likeness."

"If such are your views, let me beg you, William, to refrain from mentioning the names of either of these ladies to me again; I never heard you talk in a strain so little to my taste."

"You are growing fastidious and prudish from living too much in provincial society. But never mind, Fred., when you have passed a little time with Mrs. Waddlestone, you will resume all your former refinement. She will talk to you of '*bon ton*' and the '*beau monde*,' '*à pâmer de rire*,' as she would gracefully express herself."

"Pray let us talk on some more pleasing subject."

"Your husband's election, then. Do tell me, Fred., is it true that Rawleigh has purchased the right of '*mumbling a few words inaudible in the gallery*,' in the name and behalf of the borough of Martwich?"

"There is some negotiation on foot between him and Mr. Lexley."

“Negotiation! I had a better opinion of my friend Rawleigh. If he wants to get into the House, why not wait for the general election, and start for the county, like a man?”

“Because there is no vacancy;—and Sir Brooke has a great respect for our present county members.”

“And no ready money to throw away on a contest. Yes! I perfectly understand that sort of patriotic magnanimity!—The truth is that Rawleigh is a deuced careful fellow; and will weigh well his thirty pieces of silver before he has haggled through his bargain with that dealer in parliamentary stores, Mr. Judas Lexley.”

Frederica fired up for her husband; and was about to retaliate on the meanness of that prodigality which stoops to repair its shattered fortunes in a soap-boiler's caldron, when her better nature arrested the angry retort upon her lips. She could not, even in defence of Sir Brooke, resolve to give pain to her beloved brother! Indeed it is very difficult to indulge in a rancorous feeling towards any offender, on

a pure balmy day in May, with the young leaves quivering and the blossoms opening around us ; more especially when mounted on a favourite horse, which has been denied to our use for many previous months.

Lady Rawleigh, in the enjoyment of her ride, forgot for a time all the vexations of the morning ; and when on her return to Bruton-street, she accidentally encountered at the door the beloved object, of her brother's ill-natured sarcasms, in whose favour her feelings were particularly moved by having recently heard him unfairly aspersed, she invited him by so affectionate a smile to assist her from her horse, that Sir Brooke was for a moment tempted to forget them also. Her eyes were so brightened by exercise,—her cheek, glowing with health and youthful animation, afforded so becoming a relief to the locks slightly disordered by the effects of her ride,—that poor Rawleigh saw nothing in her aspect but the beaming and expressive loveliness of his own Frederica.

But as he was about to offer her his arm across the hall, the recollection that all this

beauty had been deliberately, and in his despite, exhibited to the admiration of every libertine loungeur in Hyde-park, and that all this animated cheerfulness was probably borrowed from the impulses of gratified vanity, he made way for his wife to gather up the train of her habit; and followed her up stairs with a feeling of as much bilious irritation, as though he had been already gazetted for Martwich, and already numbered in a critical minority.

CHAPTER X.

Beauty, though injurious, hath strange power
After offence returning, to regain
Love once possessed ; nor can be easily
Repulsed, without much inward passion felt,
And secret sting of amorous remorse.

MILTON.

“WELL ! my dear !” exclaimed Lady Olivia, starting from an armchair to receive her, as Frederica entered the drawing-room, cheered by the prospect of a tête-à-tête dinner and evening with her husband. “Here you find me, in undisputed possession of the garrison !”

“You are come, I trust, to dine with us ?” said poor Lady Rawleigh, in a tone of deep despondency, which vainly tried to sound hospitable, on perceiving by her aunt’s full-dress

cap and point-lace *canezou*, that it was intended for an evening visit.

“ I am, indeed ;—and I will explain to you all the *perché* of the business during dinner. It only wants a quarter to eight, so go and change your habit, my dear child, or your soles will be boiled into isinglass.”

Lady Rawleigh, sincerely wishing that her aunt would change *her* habit of inquiring into other people's bills of fare and accepting them at sight without invitation, hastened to comply ; while Sir Brooke, who had anticipated with some degree of embarrassment his solitary interview with his offending wife, and the difficulty of preserving the dignified demeanour of dissatisfaction with the person who helps one to a second cutlet, and waits to be invited to a glass of Moselle,—and who, moreover, was aware that Lady Olivia had been too long a resident on the continent to entertain any disgust towards gentlemen who eat their dinner in boots,—was extremely courteous and cordial in his welcome. By the time Frederica, rescued from her masculine disguise and with her beautiful hair

recalled to its usual trimly array, re-entered the drawing-room, her ladyship had got as far as the second clause of her promised explanation ; which, without any signal of *da capo* from poor Sir Brooke, she proceeded leisurely to recapitulate for the edification of his wife on seating herself at the dinner-table between them.

“ You see, my dear Fred.—as I told you this morning—I *was* engaged to your mother, who is far from well, for a boiled chicken in her dressing-room at six o'clock ; because I wished to begin my evening early, having a conversazione at Professor Axiom's at nine—a concert at the little duchess's at ten—and the assembly at Suffolk House at eleven.”

“ I trust mamma was not too much indisposed to receive you ? ” exclaimed Frederica, considerably agitated.

“ No, my dear—nothing urgent ; my sister is no worse than she has been for the last five-and-twenty years. But unluckily, after you quitted me this morning to go wandering about town with that flighty young friend of yours, I took it into my head to drive to the West India Docks, to

see whether my protégé, Captain Mopsley, of the Scarmouth Castle, who is just arrived from Barbadoes, has brought the consignment of parrot's feathers I commissioned him to procure for my friend Princess Drakouitski. I cannot think what induced Mopsley to be so indiscreet,—but he persuaded me to go over the ship with him; and while I was tasting a few preserved limes, with an arra-root biscuit in the cabin, he thought proper to mention (for the *first* time, observe) that he had been in quarantine off the Isle of Wight;—for that on the voyage home the purser and one guinea-pig had died—*actually died*—of the yellow fever!—My dear niece, you might have knocked me down with one of the parrot's feathers!"

"How extremely incautious!—how very unpleasant!" exclaimed Sir Brooke, looking with some satisfaction at the voluminous extent of damask table-cloth which divided Lady Olivia in equidistance from himself and his dear Frederica. "Martin, bring me a glass of Madeira, and take another to Lady Rawleigh;—old Madeira is an anti-febrile specific. Lady Olivia,

let me recommend *you* a glass; it may not yet be too late."

"Oh! I consider myself more than safe. I drove straight from Mile End to Sanger's in Oxford-street, and after drinking in the shop half a phial of Dr. Lotionostic's anti-pestiferous drops, caused my dress to be fumigated with the celebrated *Simmer Rauch*, such as is used by the Turkish officers of health, at the quarantine Lazaretto in the pass of Rothenthurm."—

"I thought I perceived the pungent odour of Thieves' vinegar in the drawing-room," observed Sir Brooke; "I was apprehensive that Lady Rawleigh might have been indisposed."

Lady Rawleigh felt particularly gratified by the tone of concern in which this apprehension was expressed.

"And so you see, my dear Frederica, happening to mention this untoward incident in Charles-street, your mother became as much alarmed as if I had arrived in a balloon from Grand Cairo;—nothing would induce her to sit down to table with me;—and that silly impertinent Miss Elbany pretended to discern some

livid spots about my eyes. She declared that the plague was written in my aspect; and every thing that *she* declares, you know, is authentic with my sister."

"I have not the least doubt," said Lady Rawleigh, "that mamma expected Launceston to dinner, and that the companion wished to secure her interview with him from your observation."

"Very likely!—but we must defeat her manœuvres. My carriage will be here immediately after dinner to take me to my conversation, and you must let me set you down in Charles-street."—

"It was my intention to go and inquire after mamma before I began to dress for Suffolk-house," said Frederica; "but I have no idea of visiting her *en moucharde*. Launceston is old enough to judge for himself; and if he chooses to degrade his family by a union with his mother's companion—she stopped short—for a sudden reminiscence of Mrs. Waddlestone, served to remind her that it was not his *marriage* with Miss Lucy Elbany which was likely to dishonour himself and his connexions.

Fortunately for Frederica, the attention of Lady Olivia was wholly diverted from her embarrassment by the appearance of a dish of *coquilles aux huitres* in the second course,—giving rise to one of her monitory discussions.

“I was quite surprised to learn from my sister the other day, that she had her oysters from Grove!—As if any one in their senses, ever dreamed of purchasing oysters from a fish-monger!”

“Who then ought to furnish them;—the baker?” inquired Sir Brooke, who partook, in some slight degree of his aunt Derenzy’s predilection for domestic details.

“It is a trade in itself,” replied Lady Olivia, swallowing an oyster with an air of infinite contempt. “Do you imagine that a real gastronome, in Paris, would eat an oyster from any other hands than those of the shell-fish merchant who sits on the stairs at the Rocher de Cancale?”—

“In Paris;—but we, who reside in London, are compelled to forego that luxury. Martin, who supplies us with oysters?”—inquired Sir Brooke of his butler; who had fixed his eyes

upon Lady Olivia with all the abhorrence which upper servants are apt to cherish against visitors who give both trouble and advice.

“Taylor of Piccadilly, Sir Brooke.”

“Take away my plate!” cried Lady Olivia, indignantly; “I would as soon swallow my own kid gloves, as oysters which have been swimming without their shells all the morning in a fishmonger’s brown pipkin of cold water.”

“Why it stands to reason that their flavour *must* evaporate,” observed Sir Brooke, pushing away his own; “Lady Rawleigh is too inexperienced a housekeeper to enter into these details at present. Your ladyship must be generous enough to assist her with your advice.”

“Why I will tell you exactly how *I* manage,” said Lady Olivia, who had now arrived at the point she desired. “There is a young man lately set up in business at Harwich, who formerly lived as valet, with poor dear Mr. Tadcaster, and whom I consider it my duty to patronize. I have given him a commission to supply *me* once a-week during the season; and

I will get a frank to-night at Axiom's, and write to him to-morrow to send a supply to *you* at the same time. Your establishment is larger than mine, so that you will require double the quantity."

"Oysters are already out of season," said Frederica, negatively.

"And *once* a-week!" cried Sir Brooke;—"surely it is better to depend upon Taylor for a *daily* supply!"

"By sending the barrels round by Doddington, which is not above eight or ten miles out of the way, I get them brought at a very reasonable rate by an errand-cart kept by a cousin of my own maid's. It is not *many* days on the road, and the carter is a trustworthy man who may be relied on. Well, my dear child," said Lady Olivia, changing the conversation to escape the excuse of her niece, "and how did you find Mameluke this morning?—It seemed to me, when you stopped at the door, that he went rather lame."

"Oh dear no!—he never went better in his

life; I was enchanted with *him* and with my ride."

"Did you meet Sir Robert Morse and Lord Putney?—I fell in with them just after I left you, and told them you were going out riding at four, and would be glad of their escort."

"I did not happen to see them."

"Why which way did you go?—I thought they could not possibly miss you in the park?"

"But we never went near the park."

"Only *through* it, not near it—the sophistry of fine ladies!" said Sir Brooke half aside.

"Neither near it, nor through it;—but simply along Grosvenor-place, and the King's-road, to Hammersmith. I had never seen the suspension-bridge, and Launceston was eager to indulge my curiosity."

"Lord! my dear, why did you not tell me you were going into the King's-road?" cried Lady Olivia. "I would have given you a commission to procure me some of that celebrated Chelsea lavender water; and I am sure your

mother, with *her* delicate sight, would have been very glad of some rose-water;—how provoking !”

“ Will you take some strawberries, my dear Frederica ?” said Rawleigh, unexpectedly gratified by the removal of his park suspicions.

“ Not any, I thank you,” replied Lady Rawleigh, heroically.

“ Some preserved ginger, then ?”

“ Not any, I am much obliged to you.”

“ A biscuit, Frederica ?”

“ I never eat biscuits.”

“ At least you will not refuse a glass of wine with me ?” said Sir Brooke, in a tone which instantly overcame the air of magnanimous obduracy assumed by his wife. Frederica put the glass to her lips with a smile which said as plainly as smile could speak, “ are you not ashamed of having suspected me unjustly ?” She had at length detected the prejudice entertained by her husband against fashionable horsemanship !

“ But why did you not tell me that you were unwilling to give up your daily ride ?” said Sir Brooke, replying across the table to her very

intelligible smile of interrogation. "Why deprive me of the happiness of conducting to your amusement by sending for Jessy?"

"I really believe you are jealous of Mameluke," said Frederica, smiling again as she rose to leave the dining-room with Lady Olivia. "I fancy I must make him a present to Launceston, to ease your apprehensions. Good bye! you will find me in Charles-street, when you have finished your wine."

But to the disappointment of both ladies, Lady Olivia's carriage had not yet made its appearance; and her unlucky niece was only the more vexed at the prospect of a *tête-à-tête*, when she found her ladyship obstinately bent on discovering the object of her drive with Mrs. William Erskyne. In a very short time, Lady Olivia's cross-examinations had wormed out the whole secret of their visit to Monsieur Rochard, and of Miss Elbany's mysterious miniature!

"My dear child! you overwhelm me with horror!" exclaimed the fussy aunt, when Frederica reached the climax of the history. "That

girl,—a clergyman's orphan,—a mere needy adventurer,—throw away *thirty* guineas on a miniature?—Impossible!—Where is she to get such a sum?—I trust you considered it your duty to lay the circumstances before Monsieur Rochard, and to inquire specifically whether your brother has agreed to pay for the picture?"—

"I consider it a far more urgent duty to guard poor Launceston's indiscretions from the inquisition of strangers; and even had I been inclined to push my discoveries touching this unaccountable miniature, the artist seemed to have received his lesson, and to be as secret as the grave."—

"Could we but prove that there exists an understanding between them, of course your mother would no longer hesitate to turn this crafty companion of hers out of doors. It would really be a most important satisfaction on every account."

"On my brother's, I admit; but believe me, Miss Elbany is much too cunning to have committed herself."

“ I tell you what we will do, Frederica ;—you have long been talking of presenting your own portrait to my sister—”

“ I was anxious to sit to Mrs. Robertson, at the time of my marriage, but Sir Brooke would not hear of losing so many hours of my company; perhaps he might think differently *now* on the subject.”

“ Well, never mind Sir Brooke ; he has nothing to do with the matter. But you must positively sit to Rochard ;—contrive to get your mother and her companion to the house to look at your picture ;—the mine will explode ;—every thing will go right ;—Miss Elbany will be turned into the street ;—and my nephew unite himself with Mrs. Woodington, of Woodington Park.”

“ I neither desire nor anticipate the fulfilment of these two latter clauses ; nor, to say the truth, would it be convenient to me to throw away so large a sum just now. I fear I must defer my *cadeau* to mamma till another season.”

“ Why you told me the other day that you had not yet found occasion to have recourse to

your pin money? You have been married three-quarters of a year; and the horse you have so inconsiderately thought proper to buy, cost you only eighty pounds;—what *can* you have done, or rather what can you mean to do, with the remaining two hundred and twenty?”

“Put it in the savings’ bank of course,” said Frederica ironically, for she was by no means anxious to acquaint so notorious a gossip as her aunt Olivia with the private nature of her engagements respecting the opera-box.

“Well then, I can only say that you show a very strange degree of apathy touching the honour and interests of your family! With a settlement of four hundred a-year pin money, I really think you might expend thirty, without any great stretch of generosity, in forwarding the welfare of your only brother.”

Frederica, whose hand was by Nature as open as her heart, blushed to hear herself thus unjustly accused of penuriousness.—“If you thought my sitting to Rochard would be of any real advantage—” she began.

“Of *great* advantage,—of the very greatest!”

cried her aunt. "I rejoice, my dear niece, to perceive that your mind is under the influence of rational argument,—that *my* representations have their due effect;—and as I must pass through Regent-street on my way to Professor Axiom's, I shall certainly step in, and make an appointment for your first sitting,—either for to-morrow, or the following day."

Lady Rawleigh saw that it was in vain to resist a project so obstinately determined by Lady Olivia. She knew of old the pertinacity of her ladyship's resolutions; and felt satisfied that had she even determined this sitting to take place in the fever-stricken cabin of Captain Mopsley's Scarmouth Castle, implicit obedience would have been the sole alternative. She was vexed, however, to find a further expenditure forced upon her incurrence; she was vexed to perceive that Sir Brooke, in spite of their tacit reconciliation, made no movement to leave the dining-room sooner than usual, in order to accompany her to Lady Launceston's;—she even fancied as she crossed the hall towards Lady Olivia's carriage, that she could hear him *snore*!

—and that he could sleep, and sleep profoundly too, so shortly after the first *éclaircissement* of their first misunderstanding, was a bitter aggravation of her woes! Lady Rawleigh found herself ascending her mother's staircase, with a persuasion that all which Milton, and Dr. Johnson, and other literary miscreants, have been pleased to utter touching the evils of the marriage state, falls very short of the afflictions poured forth from the vials of wrath upon its modern victims! Forgetting for a moment the importunate officiousness of the companion, she longed to weep away her heaviness by her mother's side, and expatiate in the luxury of woe with as little delay as possible, in order that her eyes might recover their pristine brilliancy in time to grace the brilliant saloons of Suffolk House.

It may be observed of women, in all conditions of life, that however promoted by marriage above their former condition,—however magnificent the roof destined to shelter their matronly maturity, home — the old familiar house of their girlhood—never forfeits its spell

over their hearts as an unfailing city of refuge. Its "ancient most domestic furniture," is invested with a species of holiness in their eyes;—its viands have a familiarity of flavour never acquired by the dainties of a more splendid *menu*;—its sights—its sounds—its associations—have a stronger bond upon the affections than can belong to any future residence. *There*, where their innocent hearts,—scorning all evidence of the hollowness and evil of the world as arising from misanthropic testimony—delighted of old to indulge in the vision of human perfectibility, of mutual love, of goodness elevated above the touch of earthly passion, of virtue fixed beyond the influence of circumstances;—*there*, where their souls were entranced into a rapture of devotion unsullied by mortal transgressions, unalloyed by shame, unwedded to earth by the vulgar cares of venal interest;—there, even there, do they flee in their domestic afflictions, for a respite from trouble and anxiety. Like the dove of the deluge, they are driven back to their ark by the turmoil and strife of the wide ocean of the world.

Lady Launceston, as was usual with her on her days of indisposition,—those days which were of far more than red-letter recurrence in her valetudinarian calendar,—was in her dressing-room; and Frederica remembered, as she approached the familiar door, the joy with which on her holiday-release from the school-room, awful with its charts of ancient and modern history hanging from black rollers on the wall, she had been wont to fly to the gentle fostering love of her mother, to be petted with peppermint-drops and Tolu lozenges;—and with which, in her maturer days, she used to creep in with one of Andrews's marble-covered third volumes in her hand with a promise “not to interrupt mamma,” but with an intention, duly fulfilled, of pouring forth all her girlish tribulations of the rivalry of Laura Mapleberry, or of Sir Brooke Rawleigh's ill-natured predilection for the driving-seat. She recollected, with a thrill of love, the cherishing softness of her mother's hand as it lingered on her shoulder, or reprovingly patted her cheek;—even the vapour of ether which habitually tinged any atmosphere

frequented by the hypochondriac Lady Launceston, had a peculiar charm to her senses as associated with that intercourse of filial affection so sacred to her heart.

It was with feelings attuned by consciousness such as this, that Lady Rawleigh carefully turned the handle of the dressing-room door that she might steal to her mother's side, and console herself as of old. When lo!—a sight presented itself to her swimming eyes, which Niobized her warm heart in a moment!—

Extended on a sofa, with her feet covered as usual with an eider-down quilt, lay Lady Launceston!—her Mechlin cap plaited with its usual nicety round her pale face!—The reader, I perceive, is becoming agitated,—anticipates a terrible catastrophe,—sudden death, or at the very least a fainting fit;—but Lady Olivia Tadcaster's information on the subject may be implicitly relied on;—her sister was precisely in the same state of health which had kept her in a sort of chicken-broth convalescence for five-and-twenty years.—What then was the motive of the universal tremour which suddenly arrested

the steps of Frederica on entering the dressing-room?—What hideous spectacle presented itself to her eyes?

On a low stool beside Lady Launceston's couch sat Miss Elbany, with her head familiarly reclining against the pillow of her patroness; whose thin delicate hand was fondling the cheek of the presumptuous hireling, with precisely the same gentle tenderness she had been wont to bestow upon her own daughter. Poor Frederica!—The hallowed dream of eighteen years vanished from around her;—she saw—she felt—she knew—that she was superseded in her mother's affections!—

Willingly would she have withdrawn herself from the chamber, to give a free course to her tears elsewhere; but the sound of the deep sigh which burst from the depths of her heart, arrested the attention of the self-sufficing pair.

“Oh! here is Lady Rawleigh,” cried Miss Elbany, in the tone of commonplace recognition, which conveys a total want of interest in the subject; and she rose from her footstool and wheedling attitude, to resume the habits of

her vocation and place a chair for the new comer.

“ I did not expect to see you this evening, my dear,” said Lady Launceston, with the negligent ease of a mother, who knows her daughter to be surrounded in her new home with all the temporal blessings of life, as well as by the fervent affection of her husband. “ I thought you would scarcely have time to look in before you dressed for Suffolk House.”

Frederica had too much feminine pride and constancy not to subdue the emotions struggling in her bosom, and that aching pain in her throat which seemed to impede her respiration. “ Hearing from my aunt Olivia, who dined in Bruton-street, that you were indisposed, I hastened hither to inquire after you,” faltered the deeply mortified daughter.

“ Thank you, my dear love,—thank you,” said Lady Launceston, wholly unconscious of the pain she was inflicting, “ but you need never be uneasy on my account. Lucy is so very attentive,—so kind,—and so perfectly understands the management of a case like mine,

that I am becoming independent both of my friends and medical attendants."

"Friends!"—refrigerated into the comprehensive class of her mother's friends!—Joined with the multitude of Lady Smiths and Mrs. Williamses, who were in the habit of sending their compliments, and begging to know "how Lady Launceston finds herself this morning."—Poor Frederica!

"—And when your brother ascertained that my sister Olivia did not dine here, *he* was good-natured enough to stay and eat an impromptu cutlet. I am expecting him up from the dining-room every moment. Ah! there he is on the stairs,—he is the only person in this house who ever takes two steps at a time.—Miss Elbany, my dear, ring for coffee!"

Well did Frederica recollect the time when nothing would have induced Lord Launceston to take a cup of coffee in his mother's dressing-room; which he was accustomed to call the temple of Esculapius, and to fancy impregnated his coat with the flavour of camphor!

CHAPTER XI.

When jewels are sparkling round me,
And dazzling with their rays,
I weep for the ties that bound me
In life's first early days ;
I sigh for one of the sunny hours
Ere day was turned to night,
For one of my nosegays of fresh wild flowers,
Instead of those jewels bright.

MRS. NORTON.

If the excitement of gratified vanity could have sufficed to restore to Lady Rawleigh that happy ease of a contented heart with which she arrived in London, all might have been well. As Frederica Rawdon, she had never passed for what is called "a beauty;" no peculiarities of dress or address had attracted the

attention of the public towards the tranquil loveliness of her countenance, or the unpretending grace of her person ; no reputation for miraculous accomplishments, no notoriety of flippant wit, had startled the attention of society into an acknowledgment of her charms. But as the wife of Sir Broke Rawleigh of Rawleighford, with her diamonds, her chariot by Adams, and her definite position in the world as a squiress of some eight or ten thousand a-year, she became an angel at once !

Younger brothers might now dangle after her from party to ball, from park to opera, without any fear that a vigilant chaperon, a Lady Olivia Tadcaster, should inquire into their pretensions and frown away their homage. Noblemen with ragged rent-rolls, and captains in the guards with no rent-roll at all, no longer considered themselves debarred from the delightful privilege of seeking her mantle among those odious miscellaneous heaps of female habiliments, which one of the vile necessities of a climate between the tropic and the North Pole nightly amasses in ball-giving London

She was now approachable by married and single, — availables and detrimentals ; and whereas a woman who regards the whole mass of fashionable society with the equalizing eye of indifference, is much more at her ease and much more capable of rendering herself generally agreeable, than the coquette whose eye is ever on the watch to catch the attention of the Duke of D——, or than the flirt whose still worse-governed feelings blind her to the presence of all mankind, saving some boy-captain of the Blues who hovers round her chair,— Frederica soon became one of the most admired and popular beauties of the day. The Dowager Lady H. pronounced her to be a model of good breeding,—her ladyship's son declared her to be as lovely as a Houri,—Lord A. eulogized the easy and original tone of her conversation, and Colonel C. asserted that her dress was perfectly Parisian. It would be a libel upon female nature to say that Lady Raleigh was wholly insensible to these triumphs. For her own share of the distinction thus achieved, she enjoyed it with as much modern-

tion as Lady Grace in the play; but when it glanced across her mind that Sir Brooke might perhaps become less addicted to dining in boots, and to running after Mr. Lexley, if he saw her the object of universal idolatry, she permitted her lips to relax into smiles far oftener than the sensation of her heart suggested; and even with the feverish spot still burning on her cheek which had been branded there by the spectacle of her mother's exaggerated tenderness towards the companion, became the observed of all observers, the leading star of the brilliant assemblage at Suffolk House.—Radiant with jewels, and enhanced in beauty by all the auxiliaries of the toilet, she felt how much her sighs would be misplaced amid that smiling, sparkling, heartless, soulless crowd, with whose moral or immoral contentions her gentle nature was so little fitted to struggle!

On their entrance into the picture-gallery, Sir Brooke suddenly deserted her side, to go and talk county politics with a little knot of heroes of the middle age, distinguished by much hair-

powder and much prose; and Frederica, who in common with the rest of her sex and caste, felt that pauperism and emigration were quite sufficiently discussed in the much-enduring ears of Parliament, and the long-enduring pages of the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews, had very little patience with his defection upon so small a temptation.

Unluckily for Rawleigh, Lord Calder seized this opportunity to plant himself by the side of the fair and deserted Ariadne; and by his graceful courtesies, and that varied flow of conversation so perfect in its tone—so potent upon the interest of his auditors—by which he was enabled to augment at will the host of his votaries, he thoroughly captivated her attention, so that she not only forgot the desertion of Sir Brooke, but all her angry preventions against himself:—before they parted, Frederica actually promised to join his lordship's supper-party on the following Tuesday! A few minutes afterwards, her husband—who with difficulty extricated himself from the group of political economists, by whom his first and third but-

tons had been argued off his coat,—returned to persuade her that she was fatigued, and anxious to go home; and on the whole, her evening might have terminated agreeably, had they not been detained five minutes in the vestibule, waiting for their carriage to stop the way. Frederica was now eagerly attacked by Mrs. William Erskyne, whom they found detained by a similar dilemma.

“Dearest Fred.—I have been dying to speak to you all the evening; but I entertain too much value for your regard to interrupt that long and tremendous flirtation with Lord Calder. I *did* hazard to touch you once or twice on the arm, when I recollected that ~~to-morrow~~ is not our night for the Opera, and that I shall not see you till Wednesday;—but you were lending too anxious an ear to his lordship’s whispers to notice my importunity.”—

“And what is the nature of your urgent communication?” inquired Frederica coldly, for she was vexed that her husband should be misled by so idle a misrepresentation of the fact.

“Oh! nothing of the least importance to you;

nothing at all worthy to break off a tête-à-tête with a man of Lord Calder's fashion. I want you to take me to Almack's on Wednesday; for I shall come back late from the races, and find nothing but tired servants, and a husband angry with the aspect of his book. Will you be so charitable?"

"Willingly;—on condition that if you feel inclined to stay late, you will find some other person to take you home. My coëffeur has appointed such a very early hour on Thursday morning that—"

"You are going to the drawing-room?" interrupted Mrs. Erskyne, with the most courteous incivility. "Then why bore yourself with Almack's at all,—to get up after three hours feverish sleep with hollow eyes and pallid cheeks?—Positively Frederica, you are growing an ultra rake; and dissipation itself shall be a plummet over you. Cannot you make up your mind to renounce a single ball?"

"No, indeed!"—cried Lady Rawleigh, piqued by the sarcasms of her friend, and the conjugal grunt with which they were echoed by Sir Brooke, into an affectation of obstinacy

foreign to her nature. "I should grieve over a lost Almack's, like the Roman emperor over his anti-beneficent day. Depend on me, therefore, for Wednesday night,—and *bon soir!*"

As she was hurried by Sir Brooke through a mob of footmen towards her carriage, Lady Rawleigh began to anticipate the annoyance of a sullen tête-à-tête on their homeward drive;—nor was she disappointed! Her husband pulled his shapeless opera-hat over his face, and began to describe circles and all manner of geometrical problems with the point of his well-varnished shoe upon the front of the chariot, with an evident determination to be silent and sulky. He was wrong!—If men were aware of the effect they produce in those nightcaps of black felt,—tired, and haggard, and dusty, as seen through the lurid atmosphere of a London morning twilight,—they would never select that untimely moment for a touch of the heroics!—

"Perhaps it may do him good to ruminate upon Louisa's representations," thought the drowsy wife; as on her arriving in her Bruton-street dressing-room, she resigned herself to

Mrs. Pasley's hands, to have handfuls of her fine hair uprooted in the process of being unfripped for the night. And with every tug inflicted by the victim who had been kept sleepless till daylight to officiate in the operation, her resolution became strengthened to overcome her husband's old-fashioned prejudices, and make her own value evident in his eyes by an unreserved intercourse with the great world, and its flatteries.

We have been admonished by the royal philosopher of the Jews, that the sun should not go down upon our wrath;—but had Solomon penetrated half the mysteries of the female breast, he would have additionally interdicted a sunset upon our *coolness*!—Anger is of brief endurance, and soon raves itself to rest; but coolness is as long-lived as other cold-blooded animals:—it is as the toad which exists for a thousand years in the heart of a rock! Were I, like Dr. Gregory and other moral tacticians, to bequeath a legacy of counsel to my daughters, I would say “Never sleep upon a misunderstanding with those you love;—if you feel less kindly towards

them than usual, the chances run that you are in the wrong."

This truth was very painfully manifested to Lady Rawleigh when, at nine o'clock on the following morning, Mr. Lexley made his appearance at the door in a travelling-carriage,—not on his road to Hampton, but to Martwich; and succeeded in persuading her husband, who gave him audience in his dressing-gown, to become the companion of his journey. Something had occurred to traverse the election which rendered their presence necessary; and after scalding his mouth with a cup of instantaneous tea, and disgusting himself with a half-boiled egg, the unshorn candidate for parliamentary honours uttered a hurried farewell to his wife, a parting charge to Martin, and jumped into the carriage which was to convey him from his distempered home to his disorganized borough. Frederica beheld his departure from her bedroom window; and when she saw the dressing-case enveloped in its travelling baize shoved into the chaise by Martin, and placed at the feet of Sir Brooke, it did

most bitterly repent her that she had not on the preceding evening explained away the ill-natured observations of Mrs. Erskyne, and acquainted him with her engagement to Lord Calder. She took refuge on her pillow against her own reflections;—and had the comfort of dreaming them away till one o'clock, when she was roused by Pasley with her cup of chocolate, and had the vexation to behold the face of Lady Olivia Tadcaster peeping over her maid's shoulder.

“Not up yet, my love?—what shocking habits!—If you indulge yourself in this manner at *your* age, Frederica, what will you be at mine?—a poor fragile creature, nourished upon sal-volatile; like your mother.”

“We stayed rather late at Suffolk House.”

“No wonder!—you did not make your appearance there till *I* and every reasonable being had taken leave. *I* was there as soon as the candles were lighted; and *I* was consequently enabled to rise this morning at eight. I hired a footman and laundry-maid for my cousin Wingfield in Yorkshire, breakfasted, settled my accounts, and read half a volume

of Nares's *Life of Burghley* (which I chose, because it was the thickest book in Sams's library) before nine; and I have since driven with Mrs. Woodington as far as Hackney, to look for a *Draconia* to present to Lady Huntingfield on her birth-day. By the way I met Rawleigh, with post-horses in a strange carriage, near the second milestone?"

"I am sorry to say he has been obliged to go down into Cambridgeshire about this odious electioneering business."

"Pray, my dear, do not indulge in such an abuse of language.—Electioneering!—call it borough-mongering at once."

"The name is nothing, compared with the annoyance of Sir Brooke's departure, for which I was quite unprepared."

"Unprepared?—you are as silly as your mother, whom I left just now *preparing* herself with saline draughts for a cold, which she protests is hovering over her!—For my part, I am very glad Rawleigh is gone; it will leave us ample leisure for the miniature, and you are to sit to-day at three o'clock."

“I am almost sorry I have undertaken the fatigue just now. At this season of the year one is worried to death by engagements; or rather to a state of feverish frightfulness, worse than death to a woman.”

“In the first place, this season of the year happens to be the only season when reasonable beings are to be found in London;—and, in the next place, *you* my dear who talk of engagements, are the idlest, the most do-nothing of human beings.—I will not call you the ‘weed’ but the Iris of Lethe’s wharf.”

“Do not call me any names,” said Frederica, languidly; “for I am out of spirits, or out of sorts, or whatever polite term is just now in vogue for being out of temper.”

“You—my dear child?—why what can you—the spoiled child of fortune and affection—have to vex you?—Have you seen a newer pattern for diamond girandoles than your own,—or has Giradot chosen an unbecoming shade of green for your train? Poor soul!”

“You do right to laugh at me; for I own I have little pretext for murmuring against

Providence. Nevertheless, I am deeply mortified by Launceston's proceedings, and at the countenance with which they are sanctioned by mamma. As we predicted, I found him dining in Charles-street last night; and the hour I passed there was enlivened by Miss Elbany's performances on the harp; and by my brother's *persiflage* respecting 'Rawleigh's objections to my riding, Rawleigh's dread of my independence, and Rawleigh's anxiety to put me in leading-strings to Aunt Martha Derenzy.' Sir Brooke *may* have faults,—I do not uphold him as a monster or a paragon;—but I think it extremely unkind on Launceston's part to expose them to ridicule for the amusement of that odious girl,—a stranger to the family,—and a very unfit person to be intrusted with its secrets."

"Depend on it, my dear, she is far too deeply occupied with her own secrets to care about yours. Did William pay her much attention?"

"I cannot say he did; but every thing wore a much worse aspect. They appeared to un-

derstand each other perfectly, and to be upon the happiest terms of confidential intimacy."

"They are certainly engaged!" cried Lady Olivia, falling back in her chair with a severe concussion. "My poor, dear, infatuated sister!—my poor, dear, obstinate, ill-fated nephew!—the ancient House of Trevelyan,—the unsullied name of Rawdon!"

"Nay, dear Aunt, I have no reason to think the evil so far advanced."

"Irrevocable, irrecoverable, irremediable ruin!" cried Lady Olivia, searching into the heterogeneous contents of the steel-embroidered gibezière for her handkerchief, to conceal an imaginary burst of tears. "I, Frederica, who am in the secret of all my nephew's embarrassments,—who have sat hour after hour upon a mahogany stool in a little dusty cupboard in Lincoln's-inn, filing off his unpaid bills on iron skewers, lest his solicitor should audit them with an imperfect scrutiny;—I, who have insured his life in half the offices in London, for the better security of his annui-

tants ;—*I* who have his rent-roll by heart, and the list of its mortgages by head;—*I*, my dear Lady Rawleigh, am able to appreciate all the horror, all the ruin, all the wickedness of this abominable connexion !”

“ When I reflect,” said her niece, “ that this unfortunate young person represents herself as a clergyman’s daughter—”

“ *Unfortunate !*—I wish we may none of us have worse luck !—and a *clergyman’s daughter*. My dear, that is a regular companion-and-governess advertisement trap !—What sort of a clergyman do you suppose Miss Elbany’s father to have been ?—a respectable incumbent of a respectable vicarage like your own Dr. Jackson ?—No, no !—some reverend divine such as those I saw in smock-frocks selling char among the Westmorland lakes ; and preaching on Sundays in thatched churches, large enough to hold twelve persons without much squeezing.”

“ But those were Sectarians ? ”

“ As regularly ordained Church of England divines as any in the diocese !—Elbany,—~~El~~bany ? I once had a hosier of that name, who

lived in Holborn, and sold the best fleecy hosiery I ever used. Poor dear Mr. Tadcaster used to swear by it in his fits of the rheumatism."

Frederica perfectly well remembered who it was Mr. Tadcaster used to swear at in his fits of the rheumatism.

"I have no doubt he was her uncle!" mused Lady Olivia.

"Because you expect to be her aunt?" said Lady Rawleigh, blundering on poor Mr. Tadcaster as the antecedent of the pronoun. "Nay!—you may dismiss your fears on that head; it is not my apprehension that Launceston will make my mother's companion his wife, which disgusts me with his conduct; for you must allow me to explain to you (in strict confidence) that he is engaged to marry another person."

"How?—you amaze me!—worse and worse! Ten to one there will be the damages of a breach-of-promise action to be provided for!"

"No!—in spite of the ill-judged attentions which Launceston allows himself to pay the

girl mamma has so foolishly thrown in his way, I am persuaded he is sincerely attached to Leonora Waddlestone."

"Leonora who?" exclaimed Lady Olivia, half rising from her chair.

"Alas! my dear aunt! I grieve to mortify you by such humiliating intelligence; but William is actually on the point of marriage with a soapboiler's daughter."

"A what?—" panted the agonized aunt.

"With the only daughter of Mr. Waddlestone, an eminent soapboiler."

"Of Waddlestone House?"—

Lady Rawleigh nodded assent.

"*Viva! viva!*"—cried Lady Olivia, clapping her hands, and starting from her seat. "My dear Launceston!—my own dear William!—my godson!—my favourite nephew!—I always said he would live to be an ornament to his family; I always knew he would distinguish himself. Frederica—Frederica! why did you never set me at ease on this point before? I will go directly to my sister's, and make an

apology to Miss Elbany for all my rudeness;—
I will—”

“Pardon me if I trust you will take no steps in consequence of what I have communicated. I am under a promise to Launceston not to mention the subject to mamma; and although you were not exactly specified in the agreement, I have every reason to suppose he wishes the affair to be kept a secret in the family.”

“In order that he may carry on his silly flirtation with poor Lucy?”

“Let us think better of him. But tell me, my dear aunt, you who were so scandalized at the notion of his marriage with a hosier’s niece, what can you see to enchant you in his union with—”

“The heiress of one of the wealthiest men in England?—Every thing!—You will find my dear Fred. that in this *nation boutiquière*, a little city gold becomes necessary once in a century to assist in emblazoning the escutcheon, where there is neither a coal-pit nor a lead-

mine on the family estate, to pay off the fortunes of the younger children, and the jointures of dowagers. Why there is young Tadcaster, my nephew!—he has every prospect of paying *me* three thousand a-year for forty—or say five forty years to come!—a hundred and twenty thousand pounds! His estate is barely five—Irish currency;—so you see he *must* marry an heiress!”

“But there are heiresses who are not daughters to soapboilers.”

“Not such heiresses as Miss Waddlestone; who has a hundred thousand pounds in ready money, and five hundred thousand more on the death of the father!—Think of that, my love!—think of poor dear old Marston Park with all its encumbrances paid off;—think of—”

“I would rather not think of any advantage achieved by such very unsatisfactory means.”

“Folly!—absurdity!—mere narrowness of mind;—intellectual people are above such obsolete prejudices! Had your brother offered himself and his encumbered estates to any young

woman of good family as well as of good fortune, her pretensions would have been enormous. Her father would have stifled us with parchments, and demanded a settlement of jointure and pin money—" ' "

(Frederica sighed.)

"enough to beggar a duke!—But with a soapboiler the affair is quite different—quite a matter of traffic and barter—tare and tret;—pedigree against pence,—pounds against precedence. Not that I should have ever recommended *you*, Frederica, to marry a soapboiler.—The wife necessarily descends to her husband's condition, and an Honourable Mrs.—or even a Lady Frederica Waddlestone, must remain a nobody for life; while Lady Launceston assumes at once your brother's dignities, and it matters very little, except to the compilers of the peerage, by what patronymic she was ushered into the world."

"I wish it had been any thing but Waddlestone," sighed Frederica, putting the finishing stroke to her toilet—which had been proceeding in the interim—in the form of an enamelled

buckle encircled with dragons and birds of paradise.

“Mr. Waddlestone is one of the most enlightened men in England!” cried Lady Olivia. “When I was at Rome the family occupied part of my hotel, and his antechamber was crowded with virtuosi and dilettanti, like that of an ambassador. He swept every studio and atelier in the place; and Milor Vatilston became as well known in Italy as Napoleon.”

“But the mother—the odious mother!”

“Is she still alive?—alas! alas!—But a man does not marry his mother-in-law.”

“Mrs. Woodington in the drawing-room, my lady,” said Mrs. Pasley, throwing open the door in some vexation that her mistress had thought proper to exclude her from the mysteries of the toilet.

“How could they admit that woman! She is my utter aversion,” cried Lady Rawleigh.

“And mine too, now that she no longer suits my plans for Launceston. However, my dear Fred., there is no occasion to let *her* know that her hopes are over, for the poor silly little crea-

ture would break her heart; and between ourselves, she has supplied me with pines and peaches from Woodington Park all the season, by way of propitiating your brother's relations. Good bye, my dear,—I shall 'meet you at Ro chard's at three. In the mean time, I must go and leave my name at Kensington Gore upon my old friends the Waddlestones;—one cannot be too prompt in one's civilities on such occasions."

CHAPTER XII.

There's na luck about the house,
 There's na luck at a'
 There's little pleasure in the house
 When my good man's awa.

BURN

It is a well-known necessity in the modern annals of our English constitution (both physical and political), that a man must eat his way into Parliament; and while Sir Brooke Rawleigh was enduring the unctuosities of a dinner at the Black Bull at Martwich,—seasoned by the pungent varieties of twelve cockle-shell saucers of pickles of divers colours by way of *hors d'œuvres*,—by a tumulus of blanc mange with a nosegay in its bosom by way of centre to a very miscellaneous second course,—as well as by the presence of Mr. Amos Robson

and Mr. Jeremiah Jobson (two gentlemen in corduroys, deeply implicated in the interests of the borough, whom Mr. Lexley called "my good friends," and "these influential gentlemen," every second minute),—Frederica,—"not at home to any one,"—was indulging in all the ruminative misery of her first widowhood; having dismissed the untouched dinner-tray, and wrapt her roquelaure around her in the easy chair of her dressing-room:

In her hand was a volume of one of Madame de Souza's most touching novels: on the little marble table by her side was a scented taper, casting its pale reflection upon a bouquet of Colvile's freshest roses; at her feet the velvet ottoman brought home by Lord Launceston from his Turkish travels; behind her head the cambric pillow embroidered with her own initials by her mother's hand. She looked the very picture of voluptuous indolence,—luxurious ease; and had Rochard seen her in that attitude, with the scattered tresses of her raven hair entangled round her beautiful hand and wrist, he would have presented a fairer Lady

Rawleigh to the admiration of posterity, than could be hoped from the formal model she had afforded with her locks tortured by a French hairdresser, and her robe primly adjusted after the latest fiat of Victorine !

But, alas ! the ease of Frederica's position was wholly extrinsic. In spite of the lustrous taper, her soul was dark as that of Sampson Agonistes;—in spite of the air-stuffed cushions in which she was buoyantly embedded, her frame appeared encircled by one of the compressive engines of the Inquisition;—and had she swallowed all the *hors d'œuvres* of the Martwich dinner, her feelings could not have been more acidulated against herself and all mankind.

After her morning's endurance of nearly an hour of Mrs. Woodington's toadyism, which she longed to curtail by a simple statement that Lord Launceston's hand was already bespoken, Frederica found it necessary to prepare for the miniature; and the mere necessity of enduring all the martyrdom of full dress at three o'clock on a summer's day, is in itself a bitter trial of human patience. But when she

found herself actually seated to be examined by the curious eye of art with the full glare of a May sunshine beaming on her face, while Lady Olivia, who could not be contented to absent herself from the first sitting, fidgeted up and down, tormenting the artist with advice, and her niece with comments which she dared not derange her features by answering with proper spirit, her heart was sickened with petty irritations. Although Lady Olivia no longer cared a straw whether Miss Elbany chose to sit for a hundred and fifty pictures, or even whether her nephew chose to render himself responsible for their cost, yet such was her inquisitiveness that she tortured her niece by her ill-bred mode of pushing her inquiries on a point which so little seemed to concern her; and Lady Rawleigh sincerely rejoiced when her hour of penance was at an end, and Monsieur Rochard bowed her signal of release.

“Is Storr your jeweller, my dear?” said her aunt, as they stepped into the carriage; and upon Lady Rawleigh’s affirmative, Lady Olivia

gave orders that they should be driven to Bond-street.

“ You must not ask me to get out,” said Frederica; “ I was in hopes we were going straight home, that I might put on my morning-dress.”

“ Enveloped in your mantle, no one perceives your evening costume; and I will lend you *my* veil,” said the merciless Lady Olivia, throwing over the beautiful head of her companion a white web, whose consistency might have served on an exigency for a tablecloth, but which called itself British lace. “ You must not refuse me the gratification of seeing you choose a setting for these,” she continued,—taking out a little box pestiferous with musk, containing a set of Roman Mosaics large enough to have decorated the Lord Mayor’s state harness. “ I flatter myself they are particularly fine ;—they were chosen for me by my poor dear friend, Cardinal Gonsalvi, and I *had* always intended them as a cadeau for Launceston’s bride ; but since he is to marry a daughter

of Mr. Waddlestone, I might just as well offer *her* a necklace of walnut-shells."

"But surely we had better defer our visit to Storr and Mortimer's till a more convenient opportunity," said Lady Rawleigh, who looked upon Mosaics as much fitter for the Museum than the jewel-box, but who was unwilling to offend her aunt by declining so handsome a gift.

"No time like the present!" said her ladyship, bustling out of the carriage, and waiting anxiously on the stairs of the show-room, till she saw herself followed by her niece; and in a moment a tempting variety of beautiful settings was extended upon the counter for their selection, which Frederica at first modestly left to the determination of the donor. But in the course of the discussion upon filigree and Gothic, matted gold and embossed, she discovered that, although the Mosaics were a gift from her aunt, her *own* jeweller had been pointedly selected, that she might order the mounting at her own expense; and al-

though she profited by this very unsatisfactory discovery to choose the least costly mode of rendering the unwelcome present available, Lady Rawleigh dared not indulge her inclination and declare the Roman valuables which she had politely accepted as beautiful, to be in truth the most hideous things in the world !

But her misfortunes did not end here.—While she was determining the shape of the comb, which was to be surmounted with views of the Coliseum,—of the temples at Rœstum,—and the amphitheatre of Verona—(a portable abridgment of Piranesi)—she heard the voice of Lord Calder at the opposite counter, reproving the delay of his order for a set of malachite handled knives and forks ; and felt that her project of excusing herself from attending his supper-party that night, on the plea of indisposition, was now out of the question. Even her momentary hope of escaping his lordship's notice in an area so contracted, was lost when Mrs. William Erskyne, flying up the stairs, rushed towards her.

“ Fred.—my dear love, I saw your carriage

waiting, and am just come to tell you that I have made a most delightful party for the races on Friday. I have engaged horses in your name and mine:—it is only ten guineas, and I know you are as rich as Rothschild.—But why are you *en mascarade* this morning?”

“Hush! hush,!!—I have been sitting for my picture. But do not let me detain you;—I really cannot join your party on Friday,—I will explain to you why.”

“No, no!—I want no explanations—I never listen to them,—mere fibs *en habit de cour*! I have made up my mind to have you, and never allow myself to be disappointed;—good bye!—Good morning, Mr. Storr!—what put it into your head to send in my bill?—I have not the least idea of paying it.”

“Whenever you please, Madam,” said the civil jeweller, too well accustomed to the caprice of fine ladies to be annoyed by her impertinent folly; while Lord Calder, advancing towards the discomfited Frederica, addressed the most gracious compliments to her upon the confession he had overheard respecting her portrait; and

upon the assurance he received from her appearance not only that the picture would be taken at an auspicious moment, but that he might hope for the pleasure of her company at Calder House that night.

There appeared no alternative but acquiescence; and having gladly escaped from further observation by hastily terminating her commission, Frederica threw herself into a corner of the carriage, completely out of humour. From Lady Olivia, however, she received nothing but congratulations on Lord Calder's flattering demeanour. Her ladyship had long regarded with profound reverence his manifold virtues;—from the power of granting government franks, to the presidency over the most magnificent establishment in the three kingdoms of Great Britain. The merits of his Italian confectioner alone would have sufficed to ensure her unalterable respect.

But Frederica was neither born interested, nor had achieved interestedness; her mind was yet undegraded by those cares of vulgar life which spring from the bills of many a Christmas, and like certain baleful weeds which wind

round some plant till they crush it into extinction,—destroy all the finer impulses of a noble nature. Reared in the lap of prosperity, she had scarcely come in contact with the words “income, allowance, expenditure, debt, credit, or creditor;” even the embarrassments of her brother were on too wholesale a scale to give her the slightest notion that a sovereign was composed of only twenty shillings. She knew that between rich and poor there existed an awful discrepancy; but of the facility with which the rich *become* poor, or the humiliations arising from pecuniary distress—she entertained a vague and shadowy conception. Even among the uneasy meditations of her easy chair, when she was summoning around her every painful image at her command, she very slightly reminded herself that she had expended eighty pounds on a horse, seventy on a fountain, a hundred on an opera-box, besides a considerable sum for the court-dress and the mosaic necklace; believing that four hundred pounds pin-money would not only handsomely cover the amount of these expenses and of the miniature, but would

leave her, according to her mental calculations, a very satisfactory balance to fulfil her usual charities at Rawleighford.

Very different and far less consolatory were the moral reflections which kept the volume of "Adèle de Sénanges" unopened in her hand!—Sir Brooke was gone,—gone for the first time,—gone with a filmy veil of mutual dissatisfaction still unremoved from between their affection;—gone upon a contemptible errand of bribing his way into Parliament;—gone with that hard ungainly mass of human insensibility, Mr. Lexley;—gone nominally for four days,—and virtually for as many more as it might suit his truant fancy to determine. And how was she about to beguile the period of his absence,—his first absence,—his confiding absence? By engaging herself in a society which she knew he must disapprove,—by visiting Calder House for the first time unsanctioned by the support of her husband!—Twice she rose and seized the embossed blotting-book (that prettiest of Harding's importations), and twice she dipped her agate pen into the back of the silver tortoise

which graced her writing-table, to write an excuse. But what could she say in such an emergency?—Another engagement was negatived by her original acceptance of the invitation; and pretended indisposition was rendered impossible by her morning's encounter. Already she foresaw the sneers of Mrs. William Erskyne, who had witnessed the engagement, and would readily detect the motive of its infringement, on her prudish timidity;—already she anticipated the reproaches of her aunt Tadcaster upon her indifference towards the maintenance of a good connexion in society;—and when [at length Mrs. Pasley, after a professional tap at the door, ushered in the Figaro of the day bearing a garland of such wheat-ears as were never beheld saving in a Dunstable cornfield, or Nattier's *magazin*, while the lady's maid assiduously lighted the tapers on the dressing-table, Frederica threw aside her pen and] Madame de Souza with an air of self-resignation becoming a martyr; nor allowed one smile to irradiate her lovely face when she beheld it surrounded with aerial

curls, illuminated by the reflection of her diamond earrings, and enhanced by a flowing robe whose satin foldings would have rejoiced the courtly pencil of Vandyke.—

There was just one single shade of care lingering upon her brow, as she ascended the princely staircase at Calder House; which, unlike the laboured decorations of a Mrs. Luttrell, assumed nothing more than its ordinary character of refined magnificence.—It was neither divested with penurious housewifery of its Persian carpeting, nor embowered with temporary verdure;—the antique statues gracing its niches were permanent, and the bronze lamps displaying their classic beauties, of nightly illumination. Frederica concluded that she had been preceded by the groom of the chambers; for she was met in one of the first chambers of the suite by Lord Calder himself, who led her forward to the saloon in which his guests were assembled. For a moment she fancied that there was something rather too much resembling an *air de prince* in the tone of his reception; but when he had placed her

in a fauteuil in the most advantageous position for hearing the concert now about to commence, and stood beside her listening with deferential attention to her flattering comments, she began to think that if Lord Calder were as grandiose in his address as Louis XIV., he was quite as courteous, and far more entertaining;—and to determine that one of her first studies should be to get rid of that *mauvaise honte* which rendered her conversation so unworthy the pains he took to draw it forth.

It is surprising in how short a time the weariness which had previously oppressed the spirits of Lady Rawleigh, subsided under the influence of the thousand joyous sounds and sights by which she was now surrounded; and her heart became as much the lighter from its previous despondency, as the sun shines with a clearer radiance after the dispersion of its morning mist. After the lapse of two short hours she was tempted to acknowledge to herself that, in spite of her former prejudices, she had never found herself surrounded by society so faultlessly agreeable as that of Calder

House. It is true she found none of her own immediate friends included in its fastidious circle,—from which her mother would have been rejected as insipid, her brother as a boor, her husband as a nonentity, and her aunt Tadcaster as the most insupportable of human bores. But all its sitting members were of the choicest fashion ;—women just hovering on the verge of indiscretion, without having forfeited their reputation ;—and men incapable of uttering a word unworthy to be quoted, either for its eminent wit or miraculous absurdity. There was not a single person in that matchless coterie otherwise than superlatively gifted to conduce to the general gratification of eye or ear.

As soon as the distinguished notice bestowed by Lord Calder upon Frederica had pointed her out to be deserving the homage of society, Lady Rawleigh found herself smothered in incense. But it is not with those fragrant fumes first circling around us that we discover the paltry nature of the tribute ;—intoxicated by its grateful vapour, we become

satisfied at once of our own divinity, and of the laudable devotion of our votaries;—and time and experience alone render the unnatural atmosphere oppressive to our feelings. Lord Putney begged leave to present to her Mr. Vaux, the most fashionable wit of the day, who had long been ambitious of the honour of her acquaintance,—and poor Frederica ingenuously imagined that he had been attracted by the reputation of her talents; while Lady Rochester, by her eager request to her brother Lord Calder, for an introduction to “*the beautiful* Lady Rawleigh,” convinced her that all London was ringing with the fame of her charms. Meanwhile the following dialogue was carried on at her expense on the opposite side of the room.

“My dear Vaux!—who was that pretty creature whose vacant smiles you were trying to Pygmalionise into intelligence just now?”

“Oh! my Galatea is by no means so marble as she appears. She is the wife of some booby Baronet—some Warwickshire Squire,—who appears to have just sense enough to let her loose on society, without his stupid presence hung

like a clog round her neck to keep her from ranging. Such people generally imagine that human beings are still expected to walk upon the earth in couples, like their own hounds; or like the varnished wooden effigies of Mr. and Mrs. Japhet, in a Dutch Noah's Ark."

"And how did you coax your statue into humanity, and off its pedestal?"

"I tell you 'tis no statue,—but a wood-nymph,—a Warwickshire hamadryad! As soon as I began to indulge her rustic predilections, and rodomontade to her about sunrise and sunset, 'rapid Vaga,' and the Malvern hills, she talked as much poetry as would have furnished half-a-dozen very decent sonnets to the best Annual going. I expected every moment she would invite me to botanize with her in Jenkins's conservatories, or take a stroll in Kensington Gardens; but I gave her to understand *I* was a *classique* rather than a *romantic*; and that my rheumatism preferred a vapour-bath to all the fountains of Helicon."

"I thought her lovely face became over-

clouded by a contemptuous frown while you were uttering your impertinences."

"Wrong—quite wrong—believe me;—the dear little creature is far from malicious!—I assure you she swallowed Lady Rochester's civilities as eagerly as if they had been candied by the Fiddèlè Berger."

"And what *could* Lady Rochester find to say to a sweet modest creature like that, on whom all the glaring audacity of her wit must have been so completely thrown away? *She* has not the least notion how to talk to a woman; and when repeating like a parrot or a starling the phrases addressed to herself, sometimes produces the most singular samples of conversation!"

"Her business with Lady Rawleigh was neither to talk nor to listen;—did you not detect the motive which induced her to sail across the room?"

"Like a yacht manœuvring at a regatta?—No indeed!—I saw her glass diligently applied to her eye."

"Poor soul!—she fancies that a woman's

complexion is as extraneous as a man's coat; and on seeing a pretty person for the first time, instantly tries to detect whether her beauty is liquid or vegetable; bought at Lubin's, Delcroix's, or Bayley and Blew's. I have no doubt she fancies she has found out my goddess's secret, and has qualified herself to offer an exact copy of Lady Rawleigh to-morrow night at Almack's."

"As like its a crimson dahlia to a damask rose!—why cannot she paint after one of her own granddaughters?—Ah! I see the *débutante* has met with unqualified success;—Calder is taking her down to her carriage,—a thing I never saw him do to any one but the beautiful Duchess of Lancaster."

"I shall leave my name with her to-morrow, for I predict that she will make some stir among us. So much the better!—we were sadly in want of a new planet in this old solar system of ours. I suspect that our fixed stars, such as Lady Rochester, and Lady Waldington, Lady Blanche, and the duchess, will be compelled to hide their diminished heads in a total eclipse!"

CHAPTER XIII.

'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,
Another thing to fall!—

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

ON the following day, just as Frederica, after returning too late from Rochard's to change her dress and finish a letter to Sir Brooke in time for the post, had seated herself with hurried eagerness at her writing table, in the full costume of her séance, Martin suddenly threw open the door of the drawing-room, and announced—"Lord Calder!"—The sapient Mr. Thomas had not chosen to conceive it possible that my lady's general fiat of exclusion could extend to that privileged mortal, who conducted her so familiarly to her carriage on the preceding night.

Frederica profiting by the leisurely pace at which she knew her dignified friend to be ascending the stairs, hastily exclaimed "How stupid!—I have letters to write for the post, and desired I might on no account be interrupted;" and accordingly when the attentive butler had closed the door upon his mistress and her inopportune guest, he issued peremptory orders in the hall that "no person was to be admitted to my lady, not on no account whatsoever." Now Thomas, who had lived with a sufficient variety of capricious fine ladies to perfect his education, saw nothing unusual or remarkable in the order; but proceeded to enforce it with so much exactness, that when Lord Launceston shortly afterwards knocked at the door—before which Lord Calder's carriage and slumbering servants were leisurely drawn up—he was assured again and again, that Lady Rawleigh was "*not at home.*"

Casting a suspicious glance at the sombre chariot,—which, although ungraced by a single emblazonment bespeaking the rank of its owner, was marked by the beauty of its horses, and the

neatness of its appointments to belong to some person of high consideration,—to say nothing of the impudence of the footman, whose cane and left leg were dangling over the corner of the dark green hammercloth with an air of defiance which plainly bespoke them to be appurtenances to an establishment of sixty or eighty thousand a-year,—Lord Launceston inquired to whom that equipage belonged.

“ Really can’t say, my lord:—but her ladyship is visible to nobody, on no account whatever.”

Lord Launceston replied to this piece of impertinence by jumping off his horse, throwing the bridle to his informant, and walking deliberately into the house and up stairs; when, to his surprise and consternation, on entering the second drawing-room he found his sister, at five o’clock in the day, robed in white satin with her arms and shoulders in the full exposure of an evening toilet; while Lord Calder reposing in an opposite arm-chair, gazed upon her loveliness with ill-concealed admiration. Unfortunately Lord Launceston had just a

sufficient club-acquaintance with Frederica's noble guest, to render that introduction superfluous which might have disguised the embarrassment of the group; for the cold and even haughty bows which were exchanged between the gentlemen only tended to heighten the blushes and vexation of Lady Rawleigh, on being discovered in so singular a predicament by her brother during the absence of her husband.

"You may see by my dress that I have been following the fashion of all vain women, my dear Launceston," said she, attempting to laugh away her distress, "by sitting for my picture; but pray do not mention it to Rawleigh or mamma, for I intend that it should be an agreeable surprise."

"I should think it would probably be a *very* agreeable surprise to your husband," said Lord L., sarcastically. "I was not aware," bowing to Lord Calder, "that your lordship was a practitioner in the *fine arts*?"

"You do me too much honour, and greatly overrate my abilities," said his lordship, de-

ciding from the loud voice and ungracious demeanour assumed by Lady Rawleigh's brother, that he was even a more uncouth savage than he had always appeared in the betting-stand at Ascot or Doncaster, or on the driving seat of his barouche. "I should indeed despair of conveying to others my own vivid impression of Lady Rawleigh's countenance; and am therefore disinterested enough to rejoice that she has selected the pencil of Rochard to perpetuate its present aspect."

"Rochard?" said Lord Launceston with an expressive glance of inquiry towards her sister. "How long has this mysterious portrait been projected? I was at Rochard's myself a day or two ago, and did not hear a word of it."

"Oh, mysterious portraits are the order of the day," observed Frederica,—resuming her spirit, when she perceived the unnecessary air of harshness and authority assumed by her brother,—a harshness which her own perfect blamelessness strongly induced her to resent; "and I am determined not to tell you a single

word about *my* picture, that I may ascertain whether I am as expert as yourself in keeping a secret."

"I never had a secret bad enough or good enough to be worth keeping," said Lord Launceston, with increasing asperity. "Mystery presupposes guilt;—a crape over the face is enough in itself to proclaim the plunderer or the assassin."

Lord Calder, perceiving from the tone and emphasis of the intrusive Launceston that his observations were intended to be personal, although—being ignorant of the suspicious negative his lordship had encountered at the door, he was wholly at a loss to what motive to attribute his intemperance of speech, no attempted to change the character of the conversation, by generalizing this latter comment and flying off to the brigands of the south of Italy, and the obsolete highwaymen of Bagshot-heath. But notwithstanding the admirable humour with which he described his own traditional encounter with the celebrated Abershaw, while yet an infant lying on his

lady-mother's knees, in the now familiar haunt of Park-lane,—notwithstanding his picturesque sketch of the manner in which the notorious band of Alzaretti deposited the murdered body of a Romagnese physician under the portico of the pope's palace on Monte-Cavallo towards the Strada Pia, during his own residence in Rome,—Lord Launceston was determined not to be entertained.—He sat listlessly rolling up the hearth-rug with his boot, as if his thoughts were wandering a thousand miles off.

At length Lord Calder, unused to find himself *de trop* in any society, rose to take leave. As he bent his low obeisance of farewell to Frederica, he observed half interrogatively, “I shall have the pleasure of seeing you to-night at Almack's?” When perceiving her brother's angry scrutiny fixed upon her movements and reply, she answered with the most gracious bow she could contrive to execute,—“Certainly! and as I am to call for my friend Mrs. Erskyne, I shall probably be there earlier than usual.”

“Is that your ordinary mode of making an

assignation, Frederica?" inquired her brother, when Lord Calder quitted the room.

"Pray do not interrupt me just now with idle inquiries," said she flying to her writing; "or I shall be too late for the post; but sit down, and make me out a frank for Martwich."

"You had better not give me ~~any~~ such commission, or I may perhaps be tempted to insert a postscript in the envelope, recommending Rawleigh to return without delay, and intercept the interviews between his wife and a set of fashionable libertines."

"Do, if you like,—he will be delighted to find me grown so popular; but make haste, for I hear the last bell—"

Lord Launceston took the letter from her hands, and directed it with a gesture of impatience.

"I think I shall go to Almack's myself to-night," said he.

"By all means!" cried his sister; "you have not been there this season. But how will you tear yourself from Waddlestone House?"

“ I was there last night.”

“ And how will they get on in Charles-street without you ? ”

“ I shall remain with my mother till ten o'clock ; after which, I shall devote myself to watching over the welfare of a sister whom I once believed superior to the necessity for any vigilance of mine.”

“ My welfare will be very ill protected unless you hasten down to King-street, to look after a spare ticket. The patronesses are seldom there after five o'clock ; and among *them*, you will not be permitted to assume the ungracious hectoring airs which the affection of your sister induces her to pardon when exhibited towards herself.”

Lord Launceston, who had been looking at his watch during the earlier part of this apostrophe, was half-way down stairs ere it was concluded ; and had alighted at Willis's before Frederica dried the flood of tears with which her vexation relieved itself after his departure. She had lived two-and-twenty years in the closest intimacy of sisterly affection with

her brother William, and he had never breathed one syllable of harsh reproof to her before. But since his familiarization with that forward and impertinent Miss Elbany, Lord Launceston's manners and conversation had become strangely unprepossessing!—She consoled herself with the hope and expectation that her brother would find the conclave in King-street completely broken up; and that he would be prevented, by the impossibility of procuring a ticket, from rendering her evening as unsatisfactory as her morning.

Among the incidents and passions influencing the variabilities of woman's humour, few are more potent, yet more indignantly disavowed, than the love of finery. From the moment a girl becomes conscious of the difference between sky-blue and rose-colour, it is astonishing what wonders can be wrought in the temper of her mind, and mood of her feelings, by the acquisition of a new dress or the sight of some particular friend's Parisian bonnet; and there scarcely exists a woman wise or virtuous enough to be insensible to the change produced in her

appearance by variation of attire. Goldsmith knew more of womankind than they know of themselves, when he made Dr. Primrose declare that a set of new ribbons sufficed to metamorphose his philosophical daughter Sophia into a coquette !

Lady Rawleigh, saddened by her husband's absence and 'vexed by the *contretemps* of the morning, entered her dressing-room at night to prepare for Almack's, with a 'mien of sober wisdom such as might have become Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and formed an edifying frontispiece to her translation of Epictetus. But when, on opening the door, a bevy of female domestics took flight like a covey of partridges through the opposite entrance, to whom Mrs. Pasley had been displaying "my lady's court-dress, and my lady's *sumsious* plume just mounted by Monsieur Nardin,"—and Frederica, through the door of the open *commode*, caught a glimpse of the splendours which were to enhance her public appearance on the morrow,—she crossed the room with a lighter step ; and a regret arose in

her bosom, that Sir Brooke's absence and her mother's indisposition would deprive her of the support of their presence, and themselves of the gratification of witnessing her triumph;—for triumph it must be,—or her second glance at the glistening satin and waving feathers had strangely deceived her. In defiance of her previous intentions, she even complied with Pasley's request that she would wear her set of turquoises at the ball, in order that her diamonds might be free from a particle of dust for the drawing-room.

To own the truth, the "three-piled hyperbole" of the lady's maid that my lady was in too good looks to need the "forrun haid of hornament," was rather less figurative than many of Mrs. Pasley's suggestions; Frederica's cheek was flushed with the flurry of her spirits, and her eyes were irradiated with the unnatural brilliancy which a heightened complexion naturally imparts. Scarcely had she entered the ball-room at Willis's, when Mrs. Erskyne spitefully whispered in her ear, "My dear Fred., you must have certainly rubbed your face against one of the red

morocco library chairs, or Sir Brooke's' yeomanry uniform, or your rouge is full three shades too deep!"—an observation which deepened the flush of Lady Rawleigh's blushing cheeks full three shades more; while Lady Rochester, no longer solicitous to decompose so exaggerated a complexion, shook her head, and complained aloud that the true French pink had never been worn by a single Englishwoman since the days of the beautiful Lady Coventry;—that even Lord Calder's new Venus did not find herself at all times sufficiently fair to venture upon rouge of real delicacy."

Delicate or indelicate, the ~~augmented~~ ^{augmented} brilliancy of Frederica's complexion was received with universal applause; and while she advanced side by side with Mrs. William Erskyne indiscreetly escorted by a single admirer, *she* found herself followed by half-a-dozen; by Sir Robert Morse buzzing his indiscriminate flatteries with the drone of a blue-bottle fly,—Lord Putney occasionally breaking forth into some bitter sarcasm, intended to brand him with the 'reputation of romantic

misanthropy,—Colonel Rhyse unconsciously tendering to her acceptance some of those cut-and-dried sentences of ready-made admiration which he had bestowed upon the successive beauties of that ball-room (and Miss Rawdon among the number) for the last fifteen years,—a young Guardsman, galloppe-mad, tormenting her to augment the list of unhappy females whom his awkwardness had assisted to stretch upon the slippery boards,—and Lord George Madrigal, the Bayley of the aristocracy, whose witticisms are unfortunately borrowed from the most approved authorities, and whose poetry—still more unfortunately—is unquestionably original, and borrowed only from himself; a young gentleman personifying, according to his own lisping *pronunthiathon*,

The ecthpectantly and wothie of the fair thate!

It was the first time Lady Rawleigh had appeared in public without her husband; and she was astonished to find that in her independent position of matron, she was a thousand times more in want of the sanction of her own sex, than' she had ever been as

Frederica Rawdon. A ball-room is the natural element of 'extreme youth,—the becoming sphere of an unmarried girl; but a young wife seems to need some excuse for her presence there unsupported by her husband's company. She is rejected from the sofas of the elderly chaperons,—who regard her as an interloper, and suspend in her presence their mutual inquiries into the extent of young Lord Priory's rent-roll;—the 'young ladies shrink from her with the briefest possible replies to her observations and civilities, in order that they may resume their private flirtations and partner-hunts;—and unless by joining in the dance she chooses to avoid the perils of her isolation, it passes into a general opinion that *she is there to flirt, and to be flirted with.*

Very soon after Lady Rawleigh's entrance she found herself deserted by Mrs. Erskyne, who went off to waltz, and to repose herself afterwards in one of the least ostensible corners of the tea-room; and unwilling to linger near the ropes with the homage of so extensive a group devoted to herself, she

accepted the arm of Sir Robert Morse,—her oldest and least attractive acquaintance among them,—and retired to an upper sofa, on which her intimate friends and country-neighbours, Lady Lawford and Lady Huntingfield, were seated in rigid chaperonship; with fan in hand and glassy eyes fixed upon their several daughters, like the immobile effigies of the Queen and Princesses arranged in chairs of state at Mrs. Salmon's wax-work! But to her great embarrassment they became, on her arrival, as mute as the puppets in question; and she found herself treated with a degree of polite reserve, plainly indicating that they regarded her as twenty years too young for the station she had chosen. How could Lady Lawford continue in her presence the narrative with which she had been recreating Lady Huntingfield, concerning the extremely unhandsome conduct pursued by Lord Putney towards her niece Araminta, the preceding summer at Ryde; when it was so probable that his lordship's friend, Sir Brooke Rawleigh's pretty wife might acquaint him with every word of complaint

that proceeded from her lips?—Or how could Lady Huntingfield inquire of Lady Latford whether it was true that the estates of Lord Offaley (the father of Colonel Rhyse who was dancing with her daughter Lady Margaret Fieldham) were likely to come round, when the affairs of Lord Launceston were so notoriously implicated in the same embarrassment; when *there* sat Lord Launceston's sister in judgment upon their curiosity?

It was, in vain that Frederica, with all that persuasive gentleness characteristic of her demeanour, attempted to engage them in desultory conversation,—in comments on the beauty of Lady Osterley and the fascinations of Lady Newby;—their monosyllabic replies plainly expressed—“As Sir Brooke is boroughing at Martwich, you certainly did not take the trouble to dress and come to Almack's for the purpose of twaddling with two respectable middle-aged females who are here on business, with their daughters. Do flirt with that foolish boy who is sighing his adoration at your side, and leave us alone.”

The former part of the hint, poor Frederica in common courtesy was compelled to accept; for she found that it would be as easy to extract conversation from the posts of the orchestra as from the two chaperons, who seemed as mutually engrossed as the partners of a banking-house on their annual settling day. But when, without adopting the latter clause, she was obliged to accept *faute de mieux* the tediousness so liberally bestowed on her by Sir Robert Morse, she soon began to find him encouraged by her graciousness to mingle more gallantry in his humdrum discourse than suited with her taste, or amended the awkwardness of her position; and as the room was now crowded by the confusion following the termination of a quadrille, she seized the opportunity to affect an eager search after her friend Louisa.

As she was about to enter the crowd, followed by Sir Robert Morse with the offer of his arm and an assurance that Mrs. Erskyne was by no means in want of her chaperonage, she noticed the stately figure of Lord Calder,

stationed in prominent dignity near the door, —where he was 'enduring, with courteous patience, one of the most confused and elaborate pieces of scandal which ever slid from the polished lips of Lady Barbara Dynley;—one of those factitious romances of fashionable life, which are as deliberately narrated in the ball-room or the opera-box, as if they were not capable of originating half-a-dozen fatal duels,—a criminal trial or two,—a suicide, a divorce, and the ruin of more than one family of respectability. From such a penance, it may be imagined that Lord Calder turned with unqualified delight on perceiving the approaching figure of the beautiful Frederica, arrayed in more than all its usual loveliness; nor can it be concealed that when Lady Rawleigh found herself, a few minutes afterwards, seated in the embrasure of a window with the utmost spell of his lordship's conversational powers exerted for her amusement, she thought of her escape from Sir Robert Morse with triumph, and of her absence from her lord and master—with indifference

The vocation of libertinism is usually adopted or affected with so much presumptuous vanity,—it is so much the custom for men to believe that it requires only an exertion of their own will to become dangerous to the feebler sex,—that the character of a roué is vulgarly considered to belong—like the profession of arms—to any fool of fashion anxious to make it his own. But libertinism of the higher order,—libertinism which affects only dangerous and difficult conquests,—requires nearly as much talent, and quite as much tact, as to become secretary of state in either of its departments tripartite; and Lord Calder was in the habit of exerting as much diplomacy and political finesse in the course of a single year in order to extend and maintain his dominions in the female world, as would have sufficed for the adjustment of a barrier treaty, or effected a revolution in the international law of half-a-dozen continental states.

It is astonishing by what a singular exertion of verbal and moral influence he contrived, in half an hour's conversation, to place Lady

Rawleigh completely at ease both with him and with herself. Sir Robert Morse, in attempting to travel a similar road and render himself personally attractive and important, had arrived at a very different conclusion. *His* homage, tender as it was, plainly implied to Frederica that her accidental position was wholly unprotected,—that she had neither husband, kinsman, nor privileged adorer present to preserve her from the ignominy of falling to the endurance of the old Chaperons, the abhorrence of the dancing young ladies, or the wretchedness of utter isolation;—and that it was her cue to receive his attentions with graciousness and gratitude. The consequence of this blind self-sufficiency recoiled upon his own head; she grew ashamed of herself, and disgusted with him for making her so.

But Lord Calder commenced *his* tactics in a far more artificial and efficient manner, by teaching her to fancy that she reigned in his estimation as the queen of the ball-room; that *he* believed the whole assembly engaged by her beauty, and devoted to her presence; and that her notice of an individual so obscure and

uninfluential as himself, could proceed only from the unlimited benevolence of her disposition. His next effort was to lead her to an opinion that the business of all persons not engaged in dancing in a ball-room, is to pair off and place themselves out of the way, that they may not selfishly obstruct the amusements of others; nor was it till he had fairly wrought the mood of Lady Rawleigh to a very satisfactory adoption of these principles, that he attempted to produce a pleasing impression upon her feelings by the high-bred grace of his demeanour, and the fund of anecdote which enabled him to vary its attractions. A man of ordinary practice in his art, would probably have turned to account the evident jealousy with which his attentions were watched by Lady Blanche Thornton, and occasionally interrupted by the forward advances of Lady Barbara Dynley. But Lord Calder was better advised. He was well aware of the advantage to be derived from rendering the interview unexceptionably calm and satisfactory, and gratifying to her feelings; he wished no unpleasing

association to connect itself with his friendship in the mind of Frederica;—he trusted that his manœuvres would soon afford a species of habitual repose to their intercourse;—that

Parmi tous les gens du monde
On se choisiroit tous les soirs ;

that they should shortly belong to each other amid the tumult of society, by the same negative attraction which united the drunken cavalier and his horse, when all his companions had mounted their steeds and ridden away. “She is in truth,” thought the wily Calder, “the most unexceptionably charming woman to be found in the society I frequent; and by letting her suppose that *I* was the first to make the discovery, and determine the verdict of the circle in her favour, her gratitude will ensure me a distinguished place in her preference.”

“You are going to the drawing-room to-morrow,” said he. “Shall you not be annoyed by making your first appearance there without the sanction of your husband’s attendance? It is

to be lamented that Sir Brooke Rawleigh should have selected so *very* unlucky a moment to follow the officious guidance of Mr. Lexley."

"I shall, indeed!" replied Frederica, "and I have been very anxious to postpone my presentation. But a drawing-room is now of such rare occurrence, and Rawleigh has insisted so much on my profiting by the preparations I have made for this disagreeable ceremony, that I am obliged to persist in my original plan."

"Oh! if your dress is complete, I have not a single word to say on the subject. I am aware that the eloquence of a becoming costume is all-convincing; nay, that many marriages have been preserved from a rupture, merely because the wedding-clothes were sent home. But who presents you?"—

"Lady Derenzy, a cousin of Sir Brooke's,—and the infallible high mightiness of his family."

"Quite right—my dear Lady Rawleigh! you could not have chosen better;—a woman who has totally outlived her fashion, influence, and importance, but of the highest respectabi-

lity;—exactly calculated to be the Mentor of a young woman entering into life.”

Lady Rawleigh regarding Lord Calder as almost paternal in the tone of his counsels, listened with avidity to the suggestions of a man so experienced in the customs and opinions of the great world; when, just as she was leaning across the window, with her long throat bent gracefully towards him, and her beautiful face irradiated by a smile of gratitude for his interest in her favour, she was suddenly struck by the lowering countenance of Lord Launceston, —fixed in angry scrutiny on her solitary interview with one of the most dangerous, and dissipated members of fashionable society!—

Involuntarily Frederica started, and turned pale.

CHAPTER XIV.

Then 'gan the courtiers gaze on every side,
 And stare on him with big looks, bason-wide :
 Wondering what mister wight he was, *and whence* ;
 For he was clad in strange accoustrements,
 Fashioned with queint devices, never seen
 In court before,—though there all fashions bin ;
 Yet he them in newfangleness did pass.

CHAUCER'S "MOTHER HUBBERD'S TALE."

"THE best method of avoiding danger," said a celebrated Hibernian orator, "is to meet it plump!"—and the best mode of evading a quarrel is sometimes by striking the first blow. Lady Rawleigh having accordingly resolved to forestal the expression of her brother's displeasure, beckoned him towards the window with a smile of the most confiding innocence.—

"My dearest Launceston! what do you mean

by skulking at this extremity of the room, like a chidden spaniel? — Notwithstanding your anxiety to be here to-night, I never saw you appear so little at ease.”

“Nor *you*, my dear Lady Rawleigh, so much; — let us make a fairer and more becoming division of the family assurance,” whispered Lord Launceston, with a severe glance at her companion. Then, appearing to repent his own severity, he added “I am here with another man’s ticket. The lists of the two patronesses to whom I applied were full,—not a single ticket to be had,—but I had no difficulty in persuading young Brancepeth that he was extremely indisposed, and might safely resign his into my hands. Poor Willis is getting strangely myopic!—for with the assistance of a bad cough and a cambric handkerchief, I contrived that he should mistake me for a man with a face freckled like a Lincolnshire frog, with red hair, and a snub nose; but I am far more apprehensive of encountering my kind friend Lady ——, who made some inquiries for me among her sister patronesses, and will naturally be anxious to

ascertain how I became more successful^o than herself. In *some* things women are not so easily deceived.”—

“After your recent compliments to my confidence,” said Frederica, rising goodhumouredly from her seat, to the surprise of her brother and the vexation of Lord Calder, “you cannot presume to undervalue my countenance. Give me your arm, and I will not only venture to confront the awful conclave, but to bear you blameless through their inquisitions.”

Leaning upon her brother, and restored to a proper sense of her own dignity by the support of a person privileged to be her companion in the eyes of the world, Lady Rawleigh now ventured amid the most fastidious of the brilliant groups from which she had hastily retreated on the desertion of Mrs. Erskyne; and even Lord Launceston forgot his previous irritation, in the gratified pride with which he observed the universal admiration commanded by the graceful elegance of his sister. Frederica was sure to please,—sure to receive a favourable award from the severe jurors of society; for she formed

no pretensions which could jar with the interests of any other person, nor affected the slightest claim upon the homage of the fashionable world. Her female friends advanced to greet her without the fear of rivalry; and the male idlers of the ball-room were satisfied that she sought no partner,—no boa-carrier,—no carriage-caller,—from among their well-drilled ranks.

As they quitted a little knot of friends distinguished equally by rank, fashion, opulence, and those talents of society which are necessary to uphold the distinction even of these threefold advantages, Lady Rawleigh inquired in a whisper of her brother how he should feel in appearing at Almack's with the future Lady Launceston?

“ My Leonora is too reasonable to be ambitious of mingling in this gaudy throng,” said he, apparently more amused than vexed by the query.

“ Oh! pardon me! ‘ Every woman is at heart a rake;’ and next to her coronation precedence, I have very little doubt that Mrs. Waddlestone, of Waddlestone House, values your privilege of

peerage, as her daughter's probable passport to Almack's. But after all

Que viendrait elle faire dans cette galère ?

“ ‘To sit in a bay-window and see gallants, like Ben Jonson's heroine ;—to defy the night-air and the breath of scandal, like Lord Calder's.’ ”

“ My dear Launceston, you seem to have acquired Mamma's apprehensions of catching cold ! But since you are so careful of my health and reputation, why could you not, being aware of Rawleigh's absence, deign to accompany me hither, instead of loitering in Charles-street fettered amid the *doux accords*—”

“ Of Miss Elbany's harp !—Allow me to anticipate your retort.—Simply because you never invited me to come, and because the beautiful Lucy never desired me to go. I am as docile as a spaniel.”

“ Remember then that I desire you will accompany me to-morrow to the drawing-room.”

“ I have no court-dress ready ; and I detest drawing-rooms in general, and that of to-morrow in particular.”

“ You have your yeomanry uniform, and my commands to wear it. Nay!—do not refuse me,—I have been earnestly in hopes of Rawleigh’s return;—and it would be highly disagreeable to me to find myself dependent on Lady Derenzy.”

“ And still more so to me to find you exposed to the protection of Lord Caldgr. Well!—since you require my attendance, Fred., I am bound to devote myself to your service; but I own I have very little taste for the toil and tinsel of these exhibitions.”

Taking him at his word, Lady Rawleigh now hastened to retire from the ball-room; and on the following morning profited by his declarations, and despatched the carriage to bring him to Bruton-street, while she was enduring the severe strictures of Mrs. Pasley’s hooks and eyes, and the still severer ones of Lady Olivia Tadcaster’s eyes and criticisms. Her ladyship was fiercely indignant that any coiffeur but Marshall should presume to plume himself on distributing the plumage of a court head; and little less so, that any niece of

hers should venture to present herself, or be presented at St. James's, without the preparation of a course of curtseying from Olivier. "She remembered that she had been under the tutorage of the celebrated Rose—(minuet Rose)—six weeks previous to her own *début*; she recollected that no young lady of her time ever dreamed of appearing even at the old Duchess of Cumberland's without a similar kind of training;—she hoped and trusted that Lady Rawleigh would not disgrace the lappets she wore by any dereliction from the habits of an ancient and illustrious family."

"My dearest aunt," said Frederica, with a smile such as that ancient and honourable family had rarely displayed among all its generations of dimples, while Pasley clasped on the diamond necklace which completed her splendid costume, "believe me, Marshall and minuets are as obsolete as Maréchal powder. You might quite as reasonably require me to appear in a hoop, or Launceston in red-heeled pumps."

"Well, my dear,—you will hear your mother's opinion on the subject. As her rheumatism

would not permit her to assist at your toilet, where I undertook to replace her superintendence, I have promised to take you to Charles-street;—she is naturally very anxious that Miss Elbany should see you.”—

To exhibit herself for the amusement of Lady Launceston's presumptuous companion, was a provoking trial to Frederica's patience. But she felt the impossibility of refusing a request urged in her mother's name; an act of conciliation for which she was rewarded on her arrival, by Miss Elbany's supercilious observation that “the English custom of wearing plumes with a French train, produced a species of mermaid anomaly; and that diamonds had a miserable effect by day-light,—nothing could be less becoming.”

Slight as was the value attached by Frederica to the judgment of such a person, all the self-content with which she had contemplated her own figure in the large swing-glass of her dressing-room, vanished at once on hearing a sentence of condemnation so coolly pronounced on her appearance; when lo! the flush of in-

dignation which rose to her cheek only tended to enhance the brilliancy of her beauty. A moment before, she had been repining that Sir Brooke was not present to give his opinion on her costume; but she now rejoiced at the tardiness of the Martwich corporation, and relaxed in her enmity towards Mr. Lëxley. • It is astonishing the effect that can be produced upon the female mind by a single disparaging comment;—the charming Duchess of Devonshire was not more elated by the compliment of the dustman who demanded a spark from her grace's brilliant eyes to light his pipe, than poor Lady Rawleigh was depressed by the sneer of the despised Miss Elbany!—But alas! the future mortifications of the day were destined to assume a still more vexatious character.

Lady Derenzy, the *grande dame* of her husband's family, who had undertaken the office of ushering its new niece into the great world, was one of those cold, hard, worldly women, who regard the gentle tendernesses of Nature as the portion of peasants and paupers; yet disdain the influence of fashion as being equally

the dowry of parvenus and provincial aspirants. —Her ladyship's notions had stopped short in their progress with the close of the eighteenth century. She still believed Edwin to be the only comic actor on the stage;—had not yet done wondering at Delpini's dexterity;—acknowledged her preference for Rauzzini,—her adherence to Arne;—maintained that no public amusement would ever rival the attractions of Ranelagh, no private one the readings of Texier. She was aware indeed that a few trivial changes had been introduced into the march of modern existence,—that such toys as steam-vessels and Congreve rockets had been forced upon public adoption; but she still cherished a visionary notion that the good old times would one day return;—that people would once more sail to Calais, in order to visit Paris, and be powder-puffed by a *friseur* of the Faubourg St. Germain; and that her grand nephews from White's and the Travellers, would live to kneel and crave her blessing in suits of pea-green lustring or rose-coloured plush.

Even as the state-policy of the Chinese has

rendered contraband all human articles of merchandise, and persists in declining the visits of tour-making dandies and quarto-making literati, with a view to the perpetual retainment of such pleasing delusions as the squareness of the earth, and the unenlightenment of the inhabitants of its surface, saving only those of the canal-besprinkled provinces of the Celestial Empire—Lady Derenzy discriminatingly forbore to admit beneath her roof the paltry innovators of the new century. She was as innocent of the existence of Mechanics' Institutes, or manufactures of useful knowledge, as the stiffest Tory which ever closed its blinking eyes against the new light, or contemned the rail-road of modern intellectualization; and having settled herself during the reign of Strawberry Horace, in a repertorium of old China, enamels, and lap-dogs, at Twickenham, she rarely visited the remote metropolis, excepting on important public occasions, such as the accession of a new sovereign; or important private ones, such as the marriage or death of one of the direct members of the Derenzy family. She had been

highly gratified by the union of her favourite nephew with a niece of Lady Olivia Tadcaster,—whom she had regarded for the last forty years as a very estimable young woman ; and whereas she was in the habit of what she was pleased to term, “ paying her duty to their majesties ” every ten or fifteen years—terrifying the modern generation by the apparent resuscitation of a mummy,—she rather courted the task of sponsorship to the new lady of Rawleighford.

It had been previously arranged that Lady Rawleigh’s carriage should follow that of her antediluvian kinswoman ; and when on the reunion of the two ladies in the entrance hall at St. James’s, amid the gold lace of the exons, and the overture to the Freischütz fiddle-faddled in the quadrangle by the band of the guards, Lady Derenzy perceived that Frederica had secured the protection of her brother as their escort, her ladyship launched a grim smile of approbation on the person of the handsome Launceston ; whose yeomanry-cavalry trappings she mistook for those of the 7th Hussars,

and, whose figure she involuntarily compared with those of St. Leger and Boothby, the irresistibles of her own day of beauty.

It was very amusing to observe the air of maternal protection assumed by this ancient lady towards many of her acquaintance among the grisly dowagers; who—being by ten years her own juniors—she regarded as young creatures, requiring her chaperonage as much as when it first ushered them into the coterie of the Marchioness of Rockingham, or of the old Princess Amelia. In many a withered fold and wrinkle Lady Derenzy still beheld its original dimple, and saw nothing but the glossiness of their long lost tresses in the frizzed toupees of many a faded brow;—the immobility of rheumatic joints *she* mistook for an air of languor—and the trembling of palsied heads for the mincing of a coquettish demeanour. Whenever Frederica could disengage her own attention from the assiduities of which she was the object on every side, and from the affectionate greetings of various branches of her own noble and extensive family, she could not but over-

hear snatches of the singular colloquies which arose between her venerable companion and certain of her superannuated contemporaries, whose horrifically spectral appearance would have entered into admirable partnership with that of the phantom king of Denmark on the bastions of Elsinour. And as she listened to their courtly croakings, she thought of the three awful "cummers" assembled on the grave stones of Ravenswood church, in the tale of the Bride of Lammermuir; of which the conclave of these ghastly antiques in velvet, with diamonds glimmering like sepulchral lamps beside their effigies, might have afforded a parody. .

"Saw you ever a more crowded drawing-room?" whispered Countess Ronthorst to the old dowager Duchess of Trimblestown.

"Crowded—umph!" mumbled her grace, with a scowl that gleamed beneath her shaggy brows like the glittering eyes of a wild beast in the depths of some horrid cave overhung with brambles. "Crowded like the hustings at Covent Garden, and almost as noisy.—People

admitted who would be rejected from the long parlour at the Easter dinner. It was not so in the Queen's time; it all arises from the want of female presidency.—Faugh!”

“How haggard Lady Rochester is beginning to look!” whispered Lady Lavinia Lisle, to Countess Ronthorst. “Between ourselves, they say she has had repeated paralytic warnings, from the effects of the white lead with which she has been stuccoing her face for the last twenty years.”

“Say rather from the effects of the Elixir de Garus with which she has been poisoning her system for the last ten. Women who begin at twenty to take Eau de Cologne dropped on sugar whenever they feel out of spirits, are seldom *out* of spirits at fifty-five. Lady Rochester's nécessaire has more Rosolio and Alkermès in its crystal flasks, than Eau de Ninon, or Bouquet des dames!” observed Lady Derenzy, joining the scandalous parliament.

“O fie!”—said Lady Lavinia, affecting girlish incredulity, yet refraining from any vivacious

demonstrations, lest she should unsettle the factitious tresses which adorned her parchment forehead.—“One should not even know of such things!”

“Pooh, child!” said Lady Derenzy, who regarded this semi-centurian as a giddy young creature, “I tell you *I* have seen that woman so stupified with laudanum, after an execution—”

“Oh! horrible!”

“—in her house,—or the desertion of a lover, that you might have shut her hand in the door without her perceiving it.”

“The errors of Lady Rochester are at least respectable;” grumbled the old duchess, looking over her fierce aquiline nose on certain plebeian intruders of the lappeted mob around her; “no one has more strictly preserved the dignity of her rank in life.—The first admirer for whom she forfeited her reputation, was royal; and as to *all* the rest”—

“A very comprehensive word, my dear duchess!” said Countess Ronthorst spitefully.

“I do not believe she has ever strayed out of the peerage.”

“Oh ! fie !” cried Lady Lavinia again, giving a playful tap with her spangled fan to the withered sticks shrunken within the spreading velvet sleeve of the Duchess of Trimblestown.

“What creatures one sees here, now-a-days !” said Lady Derenzy with a sneer, the acrid influence of which might have tarnished the gold lace upon old Lord Twadell’s regimentals, who stood beside her, which were cut after the fashion of those of the great Marquis of Granby on a sign-post. “Yonder gaunt looking woman, bristled like the crest of William de la Mark and covered with jewels, is the daughter of Lord Waldinghurst’s steward.”

“But with your ladyship’s permission, if I may venture an opinion on a point where your ladyship is in all probability so very much better informed,” said Lord Twadell,—em-
izing with his well-powdered head till the white particles flew in all directions, and the duchess’s velvet appeared to have taken multure in kind from his floury abundance,—
“that lady is now the much respected wife of one of our most eminent law-lords.”

“Law-lords!—Birmingham nobility!” cried Countess Ronthorst, the naturalized widow of a former Austrian Ambassador, whose quarterings would have agonized Sir Isaac Heard, and required all the skill of the Ratisbon College or Toison d’or to emblazon. “I do not see why the Courts of Chancery and Common Pleas should serve as antechambers to the Court of St. James’s!”

“I saw my chaplain and my physician bowing to each other on the stairs,” said Lady Denzy, “like too rooks noddling their heads in a ploughed field.”

“The learned professions, ladies,—the learned *professions*,” cried Lord Twadell, inflating each word till it swelled out of his crater-like mouth, like one of Giroux’s balloons, “the learned professions form a distinct class of the community, commanding the respect of enlightened persons of—all—of—of—of—all—classes of the community.”

“*Class* is a word obliterated from all vocabularies but those of school-ushers,—Scotch gardeners,—and political economists.

One hears of 'the labouring classes,' in an emigration pamphlet at Edinburgh, and of '*la classe industrielle*,' in the oration of a libéral in Paris;—but in London, the only distinction *I* ever perceive in its rabble-rout is that which exists between those who buy and those who sell.—Such are the '*classes* of the community,' in *la nation boutiquière*!"

"There ought to be a Pict's-wall built up to defend us against the incursions of such hordes of barbarians," said the duchess, with a dry, short, hectic-cough, indicating that the armorial honours of the escutcheon on which she prided herself would very shortly adorn a hatchment over the lofty portals of Trimblestown House, and that her bony and unhumanized frame was destined without delay to 'darkness and the worm!'—"I would sooner see every descendant of my house stretched in their grave, than disgraced by a commercial alliance. It is the pride of my life that not one of my four daughters was allowed to marry lower than an earldom."

Poor Lady Lavinia uttered a soft sentimental

sigh (as bitter as a gust of the east wind) in honour of four contemporary martyrs, whom she had seen dragooned to the altar by her grace's maternal severity. But all four were now released from their connubial thralldrom;—two by death,—and two by Doctors' Commons!

“One can scarcely wonder that young men of susceptible temperament, let their rank in life be what it may,” said Lord Twadell elegiacally, “should forget the claims of ancestry in favour of a creature so divine as yonder young lady in the white robe; yet I am credibly informed that her father is—pardon me, ladies, so nauseous an allusion—a *soap-boiler!*”

“A soapboiler?” cried the duchess, feeling for her salts.

“Of the celebrated firm of Waddlestone and Co.,” said Lord Twadell, closing his snuff-box with a jerk of disdain.

“Waddlestone!” faintly ejaculated her grace.

“Waddlestone!” cried Countess Ronthorst.

"Waddlestone!" exclaimed Lady Derenzy, as if the word blistered her lips.

"Waddlestone!" said Lord Twadell affirmatively.

"Wad-dle-stone!" minced Lady Lavinia.

"Waddlestone!" cried Lady Huntingfield, puffing up to the scene.

"Waddlestone!" uttered a chorus of abhorrent voices.

And not even the magic surname of "TARRARE" echoed from prince to peer, from peer to chamberlain in Count Hamilton's charming tale of "Fleur d'épine," was graced with more extensive reiteration than that which sounded a knell of consternation in the ears of poor Lady Rawleigh,—a breathless auditor of this edifying colloquy.

DISGUISE thyself as thou wilt, still Irony! still thou art a bitter draught!—and though thousands in all ages—patricians and plebeians,—rhetoricians and politicians,—of the beau monde and the low monde,—have been made to drink of thee, thou art no less nauseous on that account. It is, thou, Toadyism!—thrice

sweet and gracious goddess! whose taste is grateful and ever will be so, till nature herself shall change;—no vegetable dye can ebonize thy silver effulgence,—no chymic power transmute thy mosaic gold to brass. With thee to smile upon him as he eats his venison, the gouty peer is happier than the robust peasant whose brown bread repugnates thy approach.—But again I say, disguise thyself as thou wilt, still IRONY,—whether in Blackwood's Magazine, or the Court of St. James's,—still thou art a bitter draught!

Upon the original mention of a name so disagreeably associated as that of Waddlestone, Lady Rawleigh had involuntarily retreated behind the skirts of the most expansive dowager of the group; while Lord Launceston, who was engaged in conversation with the young Duke of Draxfield, implied by a glance towards the green and gold rotundity of Mrs. Waddlestone's person (who was struggling towards the great staircase, looking like the animated image of a colossal Cantelupe melon), and by a significant smile at the retreating movements of his sister,

that he was aware of the vicinity of his future kindred without being much more solicitous than herself to attract their notice. They were soon, however, put out of their pain,—Mrs. W., dazzled by the splendid spectacle which presented itself for the first time to her eyes, was too much occupied with the management of her own train, and the maintenance of her daughter's courage, to recognize her passive cavalier ;—she passed and made no sign !

“Thank Heaven !” secretly exclaimed Frederica, covering the confusion of her terror by kissing her hand to Lady Barbara Dynley, who was already struggling with the brilliant crowd on the staircase,—occasionally turning round to remonstrate with a young officer of the guards, whose bullion tassels had no mercy upon her blonde flounce,—while the dress-sword of a venerable general of brigade, two steps above, ever and anon poked the point of its scabbard menacingly into her eye,—“Thank Heaven, I have escaped that dreadful woman ! I am persuaded Lady Derenzy would have undergone a fit of apoplexy on the spot, on

detecting my brother's intimacy with the family of a soapboiler. 'I have at least the consolation of knowing that *she* will never again pass the lodges at Rawleighford after the solemnization of Launceston's marriage!'

After a tedious ascent of the crowded stairs, and a lingering progress through the ante-chambers, in the course of which Lady Derenzy's chin grew more and more elevated, till it appeared a copy of Malvolio's supercilious and self-conceited countenance, they reached the threshold of the royal presence; when her ladyship, turning to Frederica with a "Now my dear, your train," in anticipation of the interference of the page in waiting, started with a glare of almost delirious horror on perceiving that Mrs. Waddlestone of Waddlestone House, was addressing herself familiarly to the brother of the lady whose presentation she had rashly undertaken. She had some difficulty in believing the evidence of her own eyes, which were seldom so inconveniently emancipated from their almost co-existent spectacles; but a slight delay at the door of the presence cham-

ber served to convey the following afflicting sentence to her paralyzed ears! And lo! the diamond pendulums thereunto appended trembled while she listened!—

“La! my dear Launceston!—Was ever any thing so lucky as this *rencontre*! Such disasters!—I have been in a peck of troubles;—but thank goodness, all’s right again. You know we *was* to have been presented by the Lady Mayoress; but somehow or other we have missed her in this tremendous crowd, and I was afraid we should have to put up with a lady in waiting, which never looks well in the papers. ‘Mrs. Waddlestone and daughter, by the lady in waiting,’ would have been all no how, as one may say for people of our fortune; and even the king would have thought it odd.”

An irrepressible titter which burst from the accidental auditors of this illtimed and illplaced explanation, sounded in the ears of Lady Denzy like the hissing of all the serpents of all the furies!

“When Lord Launceston has terminated his conversation with—that person,”—she began,

haughtily addressing herself to Frederica, who with cheeks crimsoned by vexation had gladly taken refuge from her shame in a hurried dialogue with Lord Calder. and would neither hear Mrs. Waddlestone's recapitulation of her miseries, nor notice Lady Derenzy's indignation; while her associate preserved a most judicial and judicious gravity of aspect, in spite of the sarcastic mirth which twinkled in the depths of his large grey eyes.

"When I spied you out, my dear Launceston," continued Mrs. Waddlestone, wholly unconscious of the consternation she was exciting in the few and the risibility in the many, "says I to Leo., 'Well, my love, after all, things will turn out for the best,—*après la pluie, le beau temps*. Here is our friend Launceston, who will easily find us out some one to present us among all his fine friends, or fine friends are not good for much;' and says she"—

"Will your ladyship proceed?" inquired Lady Derenzy of Frederica, in an attitude of refrigeration such as might have been borrowed from Michael Angelo's statue of snow. But,

alas ! even had Lady Rawleigh's attention been alienable from the discourse of Lord Calder, on which she affected to fix her eager interest, the appeal must have proved unavailing ;—the fatal door was still guarded by the flaming sword of regal inaccessibility ;—the presence chamber was not yet attainable by a new supply of aspirants.—The whole group remained as incapable of locomotion as if it had been enclosed in the Black Hole of Calcutta.

But although Frederica turned a determinately deaf ear to the atrocities of Mrs. Waddestone, and the imperial indignation of Lady Derenzy, she could not affect an act of ungraciousness towards her brother ;—notwithstanding his condemnable predilection for Miss Elbany, and his injurious animosity towards her friend Lord Calder, her gentle heart could not cherish an unkind feeling towards *him*. No sooner did she hear the words “ My dear Frederica ! ” whispered behind her, than she interrupted her conversation with her aristocratic admirer by a bow of apology, in order to listen to a request framed by Lord Launceston in the

most pathetic terms which had ever yet been heard to grace his familiar oratory.

“My dear Fred.!—I am persuaded you are too good-natured to refuse an entreaty of mine, or to decline an act of kindness in favour of any of my friends. Mrs. Waddlestone has been so unfortunate as to be separated from her friend, the Lady Mayoress;—will you oblige me by undertaking to present her and Leonora?—*Do*, my dear sister,” he added in a lower voice, “it is highly important to me to keep on a good footing with this woman.”

“Lady Rawleigh!” again ejaculated Lady Derenzy, with a hollow voice which sounded almost like the “Swear!” of the Danish king with whom she has been already compared.

“I rather think your ladyship’s turn is come,” interrupted Lord Calder urging her towards the door, with a gesture expressive of his anxiety to spare her the humiliating contact with which she was menaced.

Poor Frederica advancing a few steps, now whispered a word or two in the ear of Sir Brooke’s dictatorial kinswoman, which appeared

endowed with some rabid contagion. Her countenance became distorted by grimaces of suppressed fury;—and the words “insult,—degradation,—horror,—and eternal resentment,” rattled like a volley of small shot from her quivering lips. But Lady Rawleigh, on turning a second time towards her brother, caught a glimpse in the rear of the Canteupe of a pair of lips quivering with very different emotions, and graced with the loveliest expression of distress she had ever beheld. The gentle, timid Leonora, was in truth gifted with far too delicate a sensibility not to perceive the exact state of feeling excited around her by the vulgar familiarity of her mother. *Her* refinement of tact revealed to her that they were at once the objects of contempt and avoidance; yet anxious as she had been to suppress the ambition of her injudicious parent for their appearance at the drawing-room, she saw that retreat was now impossible,—that they *must* pursue the unwelcome ceremony to an end: and she could scarcely restrain her tears on perceiving the embarrassment of Lord Launceston,—the re-

luctance of his sister,—the furious excitement of Lady Derenzy,—the dignified disdain of Lord Calder,—and the astonishment of every individual within sight and hearing of the scene. It may easily be imagined, however, that the avoidance of her lover was of these united trials far the most afflicting.

But no sooner did Lady Rawleigh detect the expressive emotion of the graceful and interesting Leonora, than her recollection glanced to their interview in the gardens of Waddlestone House, when she had bestowed the encouraging notice of its heiress on the supposed dependant of poor Mrs. Martha Derenzy; and without further hesitation,—defying at once the astonishment of Lord Calder, and the insane horror of Lady Derenzy,—she accepted her brother's proposal of an introduction to the Waddlestones, and *the introduction of* the Waddlestones; and executing a profound curtsy to the globose mass of green and gold tissue and a more encouraging one to the trembling daughter,—followed her shuddering aunt into the blue chamber!—

CHAPTER XV.

The one coach was green,—the other was blue ; and not the green and blue chariots in the Circus of Rome or Constanti-
nople excited more turmoil among the citizens, than the double
apparition occasioned in the mind of the Lord Keeper.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

It was not till Lady Rawleigh reached
her own dressing-room,—resigned her tempo-
rary splendours to their handboxes—and her
weary frame to the friendly arm-chair gifted
like that of St. Swithin with a thousand vision-
ary spells of agony,—that she could recall to
mind the thousand and one aggravations of the
disaster which had steeped her cheeks in blushes,
and her soul in bitterness. She was now be-
yond the reach of those cordial thanks with
which Lord Launceston had attempted to repay

the sacrifice exacted by his sordid speculations ; beyond reach of the grateful gentle smile" with which Leonora had raised her soft eyes towards her own. In her mental revision of the scene she saw nothing but the wondering and affectedly candid air of Lady Lotus, and the sparkling of Mrs. William Erskyne's venomous eyes,—both of whom were assembled in the presence chamber by the malice of her untoward destiny ! Lord Calder's look of grave commiseration, and Lord Putney's distant bow of contemptuous disavowal, were as nothing compared with the insulting mirth of her own particular rival and her own particular friend !—How the lip of the lord in waiting could have preserved its gravity—how the countenance of George IV. its gracious benignity—in listening to the name she had been so reluctantly compelled to stammer forth for their acceptance, was more than she could conjecture ; and willingly would she have beheld the Cantelupe melon—the subject of this horrible dilemma—cut into as many quarterings as ever graced the escutcheon of Countess Ronthorst.

And then the newspapers of the morrow !

How would Lady Rochester sneer, and the Duchess of Trimblestown scoff, on beholding among the presentations—

Lady Rawleigh, on her marriage, by Lady Derenzy.

Mrs. and Miss WADDLESTONE, on their return from the continent, by—Lady Rawleigh!

Or perhaps—for who could say to what extent of magniloquence the saponaceous gold of Mrs. W——c might prevail over the pen of the editor,—some awful paragraph headed in the Times by “*Advertisement*,”—in the Morning Herald by “*From a Correspondent*,” might acquaint the sneerers of the metropolis not only with every ell of tissue and every carat of diamonds glittering on the person of the soap-boiler’s wife, but with the future alliance about to tarnish the glories of the houses of Rawdon, Wingfield, and Rawleigh of Rawleighford! Frederica covered her face with her cambric handkerchief, to conceal the tears which fell with their falling dignity!

“She had not wept long,” as Billy Lackaday

or a Lane and Newmanist would say, when Lady Olivia, who had been describing an orbit in the parish of St. James's to catch a glimpse of the tips of plumes and the state wigs on the coachboxes of her friends, bustled in to learn the news of the court. "Has it been a good drawing-room?—many of the royal family?—many diamonds?—many foreign ambassadors? many domestic oddities?—But you are in tears, my dear love," said her ladyship, interrupting herself, and drawing a chair towards that of her niece. "What *has* happened?—have you lost any of your jewels in the crowd?"

Frederica briefly recapitulated her miseries; which to her infinite indignation were very cavalierly treated by Lady Olivia. "You are quite above the reach of such contamination, my dear," said she in a pacifying tone. "Now a person like my poor little Mrs. Woodington would be crushed beneath the weight of such an incident;—a parasite plant accustomed to cling to elevated objects, perishes when compelled to trail along the ground. But you, my dear Frederica, are like the goodly cedar-tree."

“More like a weeping willow just now;” said Lady Rawleigh drying her eyes, and attempting to rally her spirits. “I trust Lady Derenzy will bequeath me her forgiveness, for I am convinced she will die of the shock.”

“Nonsense!—She has been existing all her life in an atmosphere which magnifies the objects immediately surrounding her. Depend on it she will live to suffer a still severer martyrdom, on beholding the magnificence which Lord Launceston’s marriage will shortly shower down on Marston Park. But tell me, my dear child—for I have an ulterior object in this little visit,—did you observe any one with the Austrian ambassadress this morning?”

“Her daughter, looking almost as distinguished as herself.”

“No, no! a stranger.”

“The Princess of Anhalt-Haagenstein, and Countess Rodenfels, whom she presented.”

“No!—a *stranger*,—a person you never saw before?”

“Certainly not!—I stood near them for some

time with Lady Barbara Dynley, their intimate friend."

"I really cannot make it all out!"

"What *all*, my dear aunt? You are growing as mysterious as an oracle, or as Miss Elbany."

"Why you see, Fred., it is a very disagreeable subject to talk about, only I know I can rely on your discretion."

"You do not appear inclined to measure its force with any very weighty burden at present."

"The facts are simply these. You may recollect that I mentioned to you a charming encounter I made in the steam-boat on the Rhine, with a noble Bohemian family;—delightful people!—unable to speak a syllable of either English or French.—As I had not much difficulty in rubbing up my German, we got on charmingly together;—they dined with me at Bingen, and I supped with *them* at Bonn;—after which, we lived incessantly together through Holland till my arrival at Dover."

“And what brought them to England?”

“Ay! there’s the rub! They told me they were coming on a visit to Lord Vilz; and although I was persuaded that no such name was to be found in the peerage, I made allowances for defect of pronunciation. I am sure I had difficulty enough in conquering *their* title of Czartobarlozkna. Well, my dear,—I made no scruple of recommending my friends to Fenton’s hotel, where I conveyed them in my own carriage, because having navigated *their* way by the Danube and the Rhine to England they brought of course no species of travelling equipage.”

“Very considerate of you, my dear aunt.”

“The day after my arrival I took them to the Austrian embassy; where I did not get out, because *there* at least they could explain themselves in their own language, and I happened to have two or three cards to leave in Portland-place. They told me on our return that the princess had promised to give an assembly expressly to introduce them to the London world.”

“But *you* made a party for them to Richmond, if I recollect?”

“I did, indeed; and I fear rather prematurely! For although I have been too much occupied since my arrival in town with the arrangement of my house, and the reorganization of my visiting list, to pay all the attention and make all the inquiries concerning my friends and *their* friend Lord Vilz, which might have been desirable, it certainly *has* struck me as strange that one heard nothing of them in society.”

“Very true;—foreigners of real distinction are of such very rapid currency.”

“Yesterday I wrote my friend Countess Czartobarlozkna a little note,—for one cannot so well make this sort of delicate inquiry verbally,—asking her explicitly whether I should meet her at the ambassador’s next week; to which she replied—(and her German idiom so involves the fact that I cannot exactly determine the meaning of her phrase)—that *this* day was appointed for their first appearance in public.”

“ At the drawing-room, of course ? ”

“ So I thought—so I hoped ! But as you assure me that no stranger accompanied the princess, my mind begins to misgive me ;—more especially—I hardly like to mention what may be merely a conjectural coincidence,—more especially as a set of Bohemian jugglers are to exhibit their feats to-day at Willis’s rooms.”

“ At Lord Vilz’s hotel ! !—alas—alas !—This is nearly as bad as the Waddlestone affair ! ”

“ Now don’t laugh, Frederica !—there is really nothing to make the subject of a jest in a circumstance degrading to the whole family.”

“ But you know, my dear aunt, *we* are as the goodly cedar-tree.”

“ Nonsense !—when people wish to invalidate a fact, they always assume figurative language to allow for greater latitude.”

“ You will make quite a politician of me ; what a pity that I cannot appropriate the vacant seat for Martwich ! ”

“ A note, my lady ! ” said Mrs. Pasley, stealing on tiptoe to Lady Rawleigh’s side, with a silver salver in her hand, and in her eyes the

ordinary restlessness of a lady's maid's curiosity. And while she retired with several petty movements at return, like the ebbing of the tide on a level shore, Frederica with Lady Olivia's permission read as follows:

“As well as the pungent flavour of Barilla with which you were infected when I last saw you would permit me to understand your explanations, my dear Frederica, you have resolved to disappoint me touching the races tomorrow. But can you persist in such barbarity? It is too late for me to secure another companion;—and I cannot go alone with Sir Robert Morse, Lord Calder, and Mr. Vaux, who form the party.—The horses have long been ordered and must be paid for, go or stay; Gunter has already iced our Champagne, and packed our Périgords; I have a *paille d'Italie* hanging before my eyes, which drives me to distraction; and per favour of this auspicious but perplexing union of circumstances, I shall certainly never forgive you if you persist in your unfriendly design. Mr. Vaux will doubtless circulate in some witty lampoon that you were afraid to trust yourself

with Calder; and the world will whisper in humble prose that you were apprehensive of showing yourself in public, with your reputation still *mottled* by contact with Mrs. Waddlestone of Waddlestone House; but rather chose to stay at home *in the suds*. Ask Lady Olivia,—ask any one you please, except your cross-grained self,—whether it would not be far wiser on your part to *brusquer l'affaire* by appearing wholly unconcerned, and surrounded by persons more worthily qualified for your friendship than Waddlestone and Co.?

YRS. (as you decide),

LOUISA ERSKYNE."

Lady Rawleigh did *not* think it necessary to consult her aunt on this occasion; partly from a fear of her inferences, and partly from an apprehension that she might demand a sight of Mrs. Erskyne's note, and in enlarging upon its flippant allusion to Lord Calder prolong the conference till midnight. She saw there was no escape from so eager an appeal; that, in case of a repetition of her apologies, Louisa would certainly arrive in person to plead her

cause; and poor Frederica was so little in the habit of giving pain to any one, and so little addicted to the salutary austerity of saying "No!" that she beheld herself already seated, a repining victim, in the corner of Mrs. Erskyne's britschka.

She replied, therefore to this taunting billet, by a hasty consent to resume her engagement, qualified by an earnest entreaty that her friend would endeavour to procure in the interim some less reluctant companion; and despatched at the same time a note of excuse to Lady Barbara Dynley, whose assembly—expressly devised to ensure a second exhibition of the court-heads of the morning—she had long promised to attend:—then, with considerable vexation of spirit, proceeded with her aunt to Charles-street, to dine *en famille* with her mother. Even there she did not think it necessary to allude to her engagement for the races, fearing that her brother's idle suspicions might be renewed, on learning that Lord Calder was to be of the party; and that Launceston might still further increase her catalogue of

disasters for the day, by interfering between them in some unpleasant and wholly superfluous remonstrance.

Meanwhile Mrs. Erskyne had not the slightest intention of profiting by Frederica's hint that she should seek out some less scrupulous female companion. She was aware that no one would suit *her* purpose half so well as Lady Rawleigh;—that no one was more capable of throwing away a dozen guineas without calculation or regret;—no one less likely to detect the double flirtation she was carrying on by way of pastime, with Mr. Vaux and Sir Robert Morse. But above all, the artful Louisa was fully conscious that she was indebted for the temptation held out of her friend's society, for Lord Calder's gracious acceptance of her invitation.

It was probably for the first time in his life that his lordship had consented to appear in public in any other than one of his own matchless equipages; and at any other moment, to go toddling along the road with one of New-

man's inferior, unmatched sets, in a carriage leaden as the wings of despair with a woman flighty as the plumage of folly, would have very little suited his fastidious fancy. He regarded Mrs. Erskyne as a pretty little kitten who, under pretence of innocent playfulness, was in the habit of making a very indiscriminate use of her claws;—and detested Sir Robert Morse as a vulgar fine gentleman,—a third-rate man with first-rate pretensions.—But Lady Rawleigh,—the lovely, tranquil, spotless, faultless Lady Rawleigh,—with her unsuspecting heart and unpretending demeanour,—was an atonement for all these evils, animate and inanimate; and for a thousand more which he doubted not would assail him in the course of the day. Sharing the taste of Paulo of Rimini, for the spectacle of

A lovely woman in a rural spot,

he prepared himself for the promised drive with an anxiety as ardent as if his whole fortune had been staked on the event of the Hampton races.

In one respect his misgivings were premature. Mrs. Erskyne lived too much in male society, and was habitually surrounded by too many fashionable devotees, to be encumbered with a heavy carriage in addition to a heavy husband. Her horses, which had been carefully bespoke by Lord Putney, were as the "couriers of the air" honourably commemorated in Macbeth's rhapsody;—and when, under the cheering influence of the meridian sun, the black and well-varnished britschka glided to the door, with Vaux and Lord Putney (Sir Robert had turned sulky) in white hats in the rumble, Lord Calder occupying the back seat, for the first time since his Etonian boyhood, and a corner left for Lady Rawleigh beside Louisa in her *paille d'Italie* and choicest smiles,—assuredly no fault could be detected in the arrangements of the day. • Even her ladyship, as she tripped down the steps followed by Martin and her mantle, experienced an involuntary impulse of exhilaration which seemed to reflect the sunshine of the skies on her own beaming and ingenuous countenance. • The door was

sharply closed as she took her seat among her congratulating companions;—the postboys received their signal from the outrider;—and away they went—joyous with youth, and health, and prosperity!

Noisy and self-engrossed, neither the party nor its menial ministrants had been conscious of a voice which, like that of John Gilpin's loving spouse,—reiterated "Stop—stop!" as they rolled away from the door. Even the jangle of the antiquated and un-Collingeized vehicle which now rattled up at the rear of a jaded pair of rats,—such as are kept half alive till after the reign of Epsom and Ascot, in order to act as substitutes for the post-horses of travellers reaching London at that inauspicious moment,—remained inaudible. A head, which resembled that of a capuchin pigeon poking out of a dove-cote to watch for rain, protruded itself from the dexter window of Mr. Lexley's travelling carriage; while from the sinister—and sinister indeed was the portent—poor Sir Brooke was stretching his dolorous but indignant visage, to behold the wilful, way-

ward, wanton, rebellious, and treacherous departure of Frederica on an expedition of frivolous amusement;—in defiance of his vociferous and reiterated mandate of recall;—in company with a woman he despised and a man he dreaded;—and, in spite of his own absence, smiling with more than her usual sportive gaiety upon both!—

It was lucky for the little lame old postboy, who had been summoned from his superannuated inactivity to officiate on this occasion, that the measure of his guerdon rested with the punctual and conscientious senator with whom he now jogged onwards from Bruton-street towards St. Margaret's, Westminster.

END OF VOL. I.

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